THE PLAYSTATION®3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

June 2010
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UK's No.1 PlayStation 3 Maga

EXCLUSIVE CRYSIS 2

The best-looking game **EVER** leads our massive shooter blowout

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Brink | Killzone 3
Bulletstorm
MORE...

46
HOT NEW GAMES

PREVIEWED

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Kane & Lynch 2
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Team Intro

The first and last word in PS3 games

PSM3'S PROMISE

Fact. Opinion. That's our mantra. We say 'no' to waffly, indulgent, previews and deliver what matters. We know games cost £50, and our hard-hitting, expert, reviews reflect that simple fact. No mag gives you more new games, or does more to champion innovative, off-radar, potential classics. If you love games, and want more from your PS3, we'll get along just great.

"Meet the world's greatest game designer... you."

"Whatever happens in the general election, David Cameron will be pleased to learn we're all being 'empowered'... to build the future of PS3, if not 'bespoke' local schools for pushy mums in 4x4s. Sony's superb *ModNation Racers* (exclusive review page 90) lets you build epic tracks with ease, and share them online. Ditto *Skate 3*, with its powerful replay editor and park customisation (page 80). There's even a forthcoming secret free-roaming game that lets you build *missions* from scratch. In the spirit of customisation, we're proud to unveil new subscriber-only covers (see page 76), starting with, neatly, PS3's best-looking shooter *Crysis 2*. As ever, it's an issue packed with world-beating exclusives. Now, that's the kind of empowerment PSM3 readers expect."

Daniel Dawkins Editor psm3@futurenet.com

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
1 disruptive ash cloud
2 bags of luxury biscuits eaten
6000 miles travelled
1 legendary beat 'em up producer beaten

If you only read three things in this issue...

Crysis 2
The future of the FPS is here, and we're the only mag who's seen it running on PS3. Head to page 24 for the world-exclusive first look.

MGS Peace Walker
The most ambitious *MGS* yet lets you build your *own* Metal Gear. New weapons, modes, gadgets and characters revealed on page 48.

ModNation Racers
One of the month's biggest surprises. Read the full review on page 90 for info on its insane customisation options and top drawer karting.

June 2010: The highs and lows of making this month's PSM3

- Visiting New York City for the world premiere of *Crysis 2*.
- The Eyjafjallajokull volcano scuppering plans to see a top secret new game. How inconsiderate of nature.
- Talking to ex-Free Radical, and now Crytek, staff in NYC, who bigged up our magazine.
- *ModNation Racers* turning out to be another top quality PS3 exclusive.
- Defeating Super *Street Fighter IV* producer Yoshinori Ono at his own game – literally.
- Subway sandwich vendors not putting enough sweet onion sauce on our BMTs. Life is so hard.
- *Peace Walker* looking increasingly like one of the best *MGS* games ever.
- The benchmark-setting CryENGINE 3 runs perfectly on PS3, and it looks *amazing*.
- The collection for a new video capture card continues to grow. Only £7994 to go...

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"Nanosuit 2 grants our hero god-like powers"

Crysis 2 24

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Side B:
See real HD movies on your PS3 plus saves, themes, more

DVD Highlights Saves, videos, themes

How to... Use everything on Side B of the disc

PS3 GAME SAVES How to use PS3 game saves

Step 1 Insert a USB stick into your computer and make a folder on it called 'PS3', then one inside called 'SAVEDATA'. Drag the saves you want into here.

Step 2 Insert the stick into your PS3, go to 'Game' then 'Save Data'. Click on the USB device, then copy the saves you want by pressing △ on the game's folder.

Step 3 And that's it. Simply load up the game, and you'll be able to use our game save. But is it as satisfying as playing honestly? Is it?

HD VIDEO FILES

Step 1 Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to 'Video' on the cross-media bar (XMB). Select the disc and press △.
Step 2 Choose 'Display All' from the menu, and then highlight all the trailers you want to copy and download them to your hard drive.
Step 3 View the trailers in your videos list.

PS3 THEMES

Step 1 Insert a USB stick into your computer. Create a folder on it called 'PS3'.
Step 2 Create a folder inside called 'THEME' and copy the themes you want into it.
Step 3 Put the USB stick into the PS3, locate the 'System' menu, then 'Themes'. Choose 'Install' and 'Select USB Device'. The themes will install.

PS3 WALLPAPERS

Step 1 Find the wallpapers folder on side B.
Step 2 Make a folder on a USB stick called 'WALLPAPER' and copy your chosen wallpapers to it (or select all of them). Put the USB stick in your PS3.
Step 3 Access the USB stick. You'll see your chosen wallpapers. Select one, press △ again, then ⊗ to set it as wallpaper, and 'Options' to crop it.

Faulty disc? Send it to Disc Replacement, Reader Support, Future Publishing Ltd, Bath, BA1 2BW

3 things to watch first this month

Vanquish

See the year's best shooters in action, including Sega's eye-searing *Vanquish*.

MGS: Peace Walker

New gameplay footage of Hideo Kojima's miniature masterpiece.

Gran Turismo 5

More video of the most lovingly-rendered cars in video game history.

PLUS!

PSM3 Podcasts

You do podcasts? Where can I get them?
Although you can find our podcasts on iTunes and on psm3mag.com, you can also get a selection of recent podcasts on Side B. Go to the 'Podcasts' folder to hear them. They're MP3 format, so will work on PC, Mac, iPod and your PS3.

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Frontline

Hard news, all PlayStation action

HIGHLIGHTS

***LP2* producer speaks out**

IO chat about *Hitman 5*

PSM3 takes on *SFIV* pros

Takeuchi was surprisingly frank during our interview

The next PSP confirmed?

Lost Planet 2 director hints at 'new' PSP, confirms *Resi 6* and talks *Heavy Rain*...

Lost Planet 2 producer Jun Takeuchi scarcely acknowledges the significance of his words: "It sounds as if a new PSP may be announced in the near future. I'd definitely like to create games for that." So is he confirming PSP2 at a, er, *Lost Planet 2* event in London? He doesn't even pause to acknowledge the potential slip. He carries on talking, this time about the pressures of making a sequel to the acclaimed *Resident Evil 4* (he was chief producer on *Resi 5*), and – with a lack of fanfare – inadvertently confirming *Resi 6*.

"We felt extreme pressure after *Resi 4*, but because we were creating the sequel to a huge franchise, we wanted to make our direction clear. I'd argue that *Resi* fan service has become diluted in Japan – with lots of new fans in recent years, like those who've seen the films. We also had to battle against Mikami-san's (ex-Capcom genius behind *Resident Evil 4*, whose Platinum Games studio is crafting the forthcoming PS3 shooter *Vanquish*) pressure, and his shadow." says Takeuchi. "I don't think I'm going to deal with *Resident Evil 6* – I'm not planning to return until at least two more Olympics have passed!"

Constructive criticism

Takeuchi has famously spoken out about the insularity of the Japanese games industry and how it lags behind the West. PSM3 asked him to elaborate further: "I have to be very careful with my answer; I've had bad experiences with people twisting my words. What I will say is: if the Japanese games industry doesn't evolve and simply maintains its current status quo, I don't think we have a hope in hell. Drastically innovative ideas are needed – and quickly – to equal or exceed the Western games industry."

Alternate take

Capcom president Haruhiro Tsujimoto recently voiced his opinion on sharing development, and admitted he would remove all Western input if resources allowed: "Our experience [with *Bionic Commando*] has demonstrated the difficulty of outsourcing development overseas, but we can't create a enough titles without using these companies. We are considering ways to separate the roles of Japan and overseas."

Capcom's forthcoming *Dead Rising 2* is an East/West collaboration, as Takeuchi explains, "We have the original game's director and the planning team speaking with Blue Castle on almost a daily basis – and studio visits every few weeks. The lines of communication on this project have been greatly expanded. This is very much an equal collaboration between the two teams. What we wanted to achieve was to meld Capcom's DNA with a foreign studio, while at the same time taking advantage of their strong points."

Heavy Rain was cited by Takeuchi as an example of the type of game Japanese developers should be aspiring to make. "I've just started to play *Heavy Rain* and I'm hugely

"It sounds as if a new PSP may be announced in the near future"

impressed with this new approach. As a creator myself, it's made me feel down – almost like somebody's stolen my thunder. Japan should absolutely be coming up with high-concept material like this.

"I think Japanese players are separated into a couple of different groups", says Takeuchi. "One still hangs onto the traditional misconception that since video games originated in Japan, everything we produce is superior to the West. Another section have never heard of most Western games. I would suggest Western publishers aren't doing a great job when it comes to marketing in Japan. Actually, though, *Modern Warfare 2* is selling relatively well in Japan compared to the original."

Find out how Takeuchi's latest game – sci-fi squad shooter *Lost Planet 2* – fares by turning to page 84.

Opinion | Takeuchi speaks out

Some choice quotes from one of Capcom's main men...

On *Bionic Commando*

"We learned several hard lessons. *Bionic Commando* was essentially commissioned and farmed out to Grin, with Ben Judd (the first Westerner to ever produce a Capcom game) creating the game from Capcom Japan."

On *LP2*'s vital suits....

"My favourite is the gigantic Akrid/Vital Suit hybrid where one player pilots and the others are gunning on the leg turrets. From a certain angle, he looks cute and cuddly, but players can enter its intestines, grapple onto its back. It's a multi-talented monster."

On *Bayonetta*'s director

"I'm very good friends with Kamiya-san, and I can tell you that with *Bayonetta* he didn't go out with the intention of trying to save Japanese gaming. As a developer, he simply created something he was passionate about, and the result is highly impressive."

On *LP2*'s influences

I'd suggest *Forza Motorsport 3* as a big influence. I'm aware it's a totally different genre, but I was hugely impressed with the streamlined interface; the concept of *Lost Planet 2*'s integrated single/multi-player front end stemmed directly from *Forza 3*."

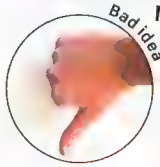
On co-op multi-player

"I expect the popularity of the co-op gaming to increase in the future. Rather than AI playing in a prescribed way, you can't predict what a human player's going to do next. That element of surprise is very interesting for players and developers too."

The Opinionator*

"Single-player games are more relevant than ever"

Ubisoft multi-player developer Patrick Redding recently told website VideogamesDaily that "Nobody wants a solitary gaming experience any more." Is this true? We don't think so. Some of our highest-scoring games are purely single-player experiences: *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Heavy Rain*, *God Of War* 3, *Assassin's Creed 2*, the first *BioShock*. Would these games have been better with a multi-player element tacked on? Of course not.



Lone soldier

For plot driven games that rely on atmosphere and storytelling, flying solo is still the best way to experience them. When you're playing with a pal in co-op, you don't get the same level of absorption as you do on your own. With constant chatter over the headset, you feel like you're playing a *game*: not lost in another universe. And that defeats the purpose of games like *Arkham Asylum* or *BioShock* that are designed to draw you into their world. And let's face it: when you're playing a co-op game with cut-scenes, you just talk over them right? You can't enjoy the story as it was intended.

And you might find it hard to believe, but not everyone has a broadband connection – or even friends who would want to play games with them. The UK has a comparatively low internet connection rate, especially compared to the US and countries in Asia. So there will always be people whose gaming life revolves around sitting at home, on their own, playing through a ten-hour story-driven game.

Multi-player *is* more dominant, but it'll never completely take over.

We just hope the popularity of online play doesn't force developers to compromise their single-player game to fit in more multi-player features. Whassat? *Skate* 3 does *what*? Turn to page 80. We give up. **Andy Kelly**

*The views of The Opinionator do not necessarily reflect those of the PSM3 team

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

Linux was removed because of PS Move

THE TRUTH

The net conspiracy theory is that PS3's Linux O/S support was removed to free up a processor for PS Move. "Completely unfounded" a Sony spokesperson told us. So why *was* Linux support squeezed out? You have to think about the recent story of iPhone hacker George Hotz, who claimed to have broken through the console's tight wall of security. An official Sony statement about the removal said "We will continue to take action to provide users with a more secure system, and to protect the intellectual property of the content offered on the PS3." This hints heavily at Hotz' hacking being the reason – or one of the reasons – for the controversial firmware update. Sony's statement suggests it was simply a regular security issue of no note. Either way, it's bye-bye Linux.

1 Dead Rising 2

6000 zombies and counting

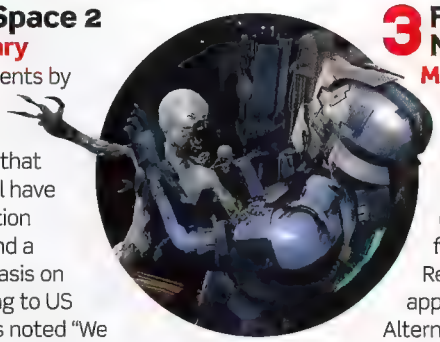
The latest zombie count in Las Vegas-based *Dead Rising* 2 is 6,000 – that's a lot of undead to murder. The key to racking up big points will be combining items. Mostly you can do this through trial and error (hey, who wouldn't think to put two chainsaws onto the ends of a canoe paddle?) but to help you out the developers are implementing unlockable cards to demonstrate the more obscure combos. You'll also need to think creatively when you're butchering brain-eaters for points in the competitive, Reality TV-themed multi-player modes, one of which includes human-sized hamster balls.

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Blue Castle | **ETA** September

"Hitman 5 has been strongly hinted at"
Hitman 5 page 15

"The latest zombie count is 6000. That's a lot of undead"

2 Dead Space 2
Still scary



Recent comments by *Dead Space 2* producer Rich Briggs, reveal that the sequel will have both more action sequences, and a greater emphasis on story. Speaking to US site G4, Briggs noted "We don't want people to be sacrificing their understanding of the story and their enjoyment of the environment because they're always so scared." However, he goes on to allay our fears that the game will be too action-focused by saying "we're gonna scare the pants off you as many times as we can". How will they make the game even more scary? We'd put money on *Dead Space 2* being 3D capable. Read our in-depth preview and interview next month.

Pub EA | **Dev** Visceral | **ETA** 2011

3 Fallout: New Vegas
Make friends, influence people

Factions will play a key role in New Vegas. But who to choose? You could go for the New California Republic, self-appointed 'good cops'. Alternatively you could side with Caesar's Legion, a group of slavers based on the Vegas Strip. If neither of those tickle your fancy, you can always work for the people of the Nevada Wasteland – like a kind of freelance hero. More info next issue.

Pub Bethesda | **Dev** Obsidian | **ETA** October

4 Lord of the Rings: War in the North
Form your own Fellowship

This has some real potential. *War in the North* is an action RPG based on Tolkien's trilogy that's designed to be played in three-man co-op. Quests will take you through and beyond well-known movie scenes. Three races have been confirmed so far – human, elf and dwarf, and each one can be customised extensively.

Pub Warner | **Dev** Snowblind | **ETA** 2011

Las Vegas and Legolas RPG fans are going to be spoilt for choice when *Fallout* and *LOTR* eventually hit.

5 Gran Turismo 5
In-game footage spotted

The latest vid of the stunning racer shows a replay of super-cars racing round the Nurburgring. It looks incredible, particularly the reflections. Our only concern is that the AI looks a bit stale – there isn't a single overtake, only mild jockeying for position.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Polyphony Digital | **ETA** Autumn

Why We Love...

Making money

Virtually generating income beats any day job

Work? How is that considered 'fun'?

You're right, it's definitely not fun in real life, and it's not fun when games feel like work either. By 'generating income' we mean earning money for doing, basically, sod all – but feeling like some high-falutin' tycoon in the process. The most recent example is *Assassin's Creed 2*. Once you get hold of the villa, it generates money automatically, accruing a nice stash of Florins every 20 minutes.

What's wrong with doing it the old-fashioned way?

What, you mean buying and selling things, or opening conspicuous treasure chests? That's annoying, and it grinds whatever game you're playing to a halt while you fiddle with some boring menu screen. It's an idea that *Final Fantasy* has toyed with, too. In the bold, experimental *VIII*, enemies didn't drop cash – instead, you earned a regular income from Squall's job as a mercenary soldier. But the main reason we like generating income is that, essentially, it gives you cash for having *fun*. It may only be fake money, but the satisfaction of seeing your imaginary wallet expand while you're off stealth-stabbing flamboyant Italians is all too enjoyable.

Who are you?

Games from the past *Final Fantasy VIII, Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3, Assassin's Creed 2*

Games of the future *Fallout: New Vegas, Final Fantasy XIV, R.U.S.E*

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Having had its thunder pinched by *Bayonetta* and *God Of War 3*, the *Devil May Cry* series is ringing the changes, with a US source claiming *Heavenly Sword* dev, Ninja Theory, is working on **Devil May Cry 5** for current-gen consoles. We hear it isn't currently on Capcom's two year schedule, but don't rule out a surprise announcement at E3.

Konami have recently unveiled a new **Silent Hill** game, in development over at Czech-based Vatra Games. Despite being little-known, Vatra does have talent onboard from both 2K Czech (*Mafia II*) and Headstrong (*House Of The Dead: Overkill*) so they'll know their way round a console. Sadly, the rumoured reunion of 'Team Silent', the original Japanese development team, won't happen because... they don't want to work together anymore. It'd be like reforming The Beatles without John, Paul, George and Ringo. However, and perhaps more interestingly, Japanese developer Grasshopper (*No More Heroes*) are currently making a horror game for EA. They've got Shinji Mikami on board as a consultant, and Akira Yamaoka, the sound director of the original *Silent Hill* games; perhaps further explaining why Konami can't reunite Team Silent.

"Ninja Theory are working on *Devil May Cry 5*"

EA's **Rugby 2012** will tie in with the 2011 World Cup. The game's existence was hinted by developers HB Studios, who made *FIFA 10* on PC and *Rugby 08* on PS2, and should be out for PS3 next summer. Prefer your sports more extreme? Tony Hawk has recently tweeted that his next game will be called **Tony Hawk: Shred**. It'll use the skateboard peripheral from *TH: Ride*. 'Shred' can be used to describe a number of things, but most commonly snowboarding.

It might seem like an odd choice, but newly formed developer Killspace (made up, among others, of ex-Pandemic and EA LA employees) has registered the domain name apocalypsenowgame.com, suggesting work on, well, **Apocalypse Now**. The studio also hints that it's working with a big publisher on new IP.

Sadly, plans to bring **Star Trek Online** to console have been put on hold by Cryptic Studios. The PS3 is still yet to get a proper MMO – **Final Fantasy XIV** and **The Agency** are still in development, but we can expect to see more on both at E3 in June.

Capcom's **Marvel vs Capcom 3** will use the same engine as *Street Fighter IV*, and features Wolverine, Iron Man, and Chris Redfield from the *Resi* series.

Finally, Hideo Kojima's Twitter feed points to **Zone Of The Enders 3**: "I'm thinking about the casting for my next title. The plan hasn't reached a detailed level, but everything is advancing in my head. Title, game design, story, characters, setting research, the mecha that appear... the major story sequences." Mecha or not, try to stay under 140 characters, Koj.

"Modern Warfare devs form new studio"
Respawn Entertainment page 16

Bang tang syne It's been four years since Agent 47's last game. He's way overdue a sequel.

Hitman 5: Very likely

IO developer drops big hints at sequel

We recently sat down with IO Interactive's Karsten Lund, director of *Kane & Lynch 2*, for an exclusive one-on-one interview. Naturally, we asked him about the future of the *Hitman* series. After all, it's been nearly five years since the brilliant *Blood Money*.

"Why are you bringing out a new *Kane & Lynch* and not a new *Hitman*, which a lot of people are crying out for?" we asked. "We're not here to talk about *Hitman*. We think the world needs more *Kane & Lynch first*," says Karsten. "Well, do you think you'll be talking about *Hitman* in the future?" we press. "In the future, yes, there might be a chance." he says, smiling; perhaps more so as we mention the impending E3 games show.

A confirmation, then? Not *quite*, but US magazine Variety claimed last year that *Hitman 5* would contain story elements from the upcoming sequel to the Timothy Olyphant-starring film, citing a 'late 2010' release, which seems unlikely as no details have emerged – but we'll see.

Oh, and finally, a fellow journalist went to IO recently to see *Kane and Lynch 2*, and was told to stay away from part of the office where all the computers had *Hitman* wallpapers...

"In the future there may be a chance we talk about Hitman"

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** IO Interactive | **ETA** 2011

PSM3 subscriber covers

Loyal PSM3 readers reap art benefits

As well as getting every issue of PSM3 delivered directly to your door at a reduced price *and* a free gift (or two), there's now another incentive to subscribe to your favourite PlayStation 3 magazine: special, limited edition subscriber covers.

The first one is for *Crysis 2*, and features a brand new piece of artwork and no cover text. It's minimal, desirable (we hope) and, er, it stops our publisher having heart attacks when we design our cover to look like a Bauhaus art project with no 'sales hook'. Expect an equally beautiful, and exclusive, subscriber cover next month.

Flick to page 76 for details on how to place your order. This month you'll get Pixar's incredible Oscar-winning Up and the heartwarming Wall-E on Blu-ray for free, as well as your new cover. You know it makes sense.

Cover feature Our already lovely cover (top) gets a minimal rework for subscribers (left). Nice, no?

Vote for ~~Clegg~~ Drake

Hung result less likely in The 2010 Golden Joystick Awards

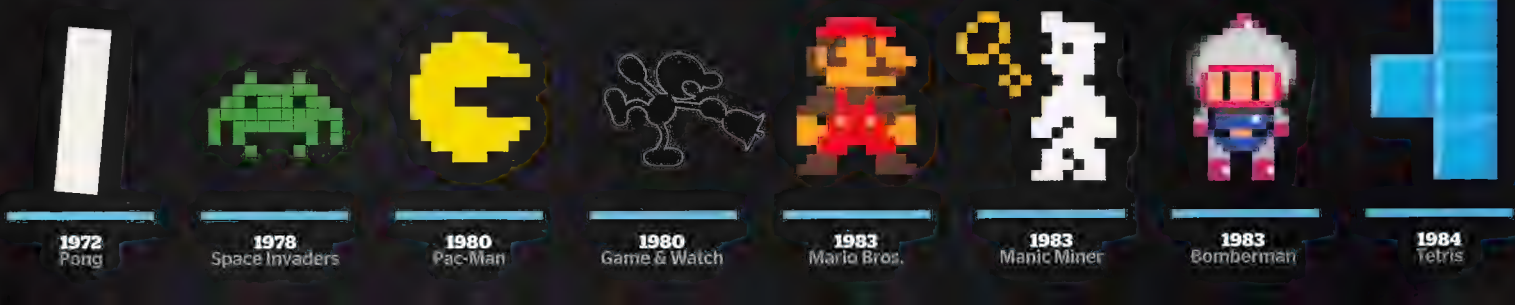
TV talent shows, Eurovision, general elections – everyone's after a vote these days. But now you can cast the most meaningful vote of all by having your say about which games get shortlisted for the 28th Golden Joystick Awards. The long list voting is now open.

Any game released in the last 12 months is eligible, and this year the categories have been changed so that instead of each platform having its own 'best game' award you can now vote for your favourite game in each genre. *Uncharted 2* for best Action adventure? That's up to you.

Long list voting closes on May 27 so you haven't got long to pick the games you want to see on the shortlists. Visit www.goldenjoystick.com now to cast your votes and get your favourite games a step closer to glory.

Credit due Er, Nate, we said 'hung parliament', not 'hang....foraminute'. *Phew.*

Type-cast Does Kratos deserve to win? Frankly, [illegible] but you can vote anyway.



"We asked him to Dragon Punch us"
Super Street Fighter IV page 18

Redeployed West and Zampella have formed their own elite development force.

Modern Warfare creators defect to EA, form new dev studio

Why developer Infinity Ward's struggles could actually be a *good* thing

Following an as yet unresolved dispute over royalties and alleged "breaches of contract and insubordination", Vincent Zampella and Jason West, studio heads of Infinity Ward, were fired by *Call of Duty* publisher Activision (last month's top news story in PSM3). But what now? The duo have formed Respawn Entertainment and EA is set to publish their first project. "This is the start of a great partnership," said EA Games president Frank Gibeau. "One that I expect will develop blockbuster game franchises."

Zampella and West aren't alone: other Infinity Ward members have fled to join them, including *Modern Warfare 2*'s entire lead design team and many of the game's writers and animators.

So IW as we know it may be in turmoil, with 13 high profile departures in the last few weeks alone, but the formation of Respawn Entertainment bodes well for gamers. Contractually wed to the *MW* franchise, West and Zampella might've been creatively restricted, but now they're free to make any game *they* want.

Infinity Ward is far from dead too. According to an anonymous employee: "We've lost team members, but not all the talent. We're keeping the *Modern Warfare* name alive." This means there are three new *CoD* games (*Modern Warfare 3*, *CoD 7* and Sledgehammer's *CoD* project) in development, plus whatever Respawn creates. Either way, it's looking good for PS3 shooter fans.

Headliners Zampella (left) and West (right) ended up at EA. Who saw *that* coming, eh? Well, everyone.

PSM3 owned by Dragon Punch

Street Fighter IV boss reveals game's secrets... and bashes us up

Super Street Fighter IV producer, Yoshinori Ono is the most cheerful man we've met. He let us into the secret of the game's famed combat, and the thorny issue of 'cheap' play before punching us in the face: "*SSFIV* has brought back the feeling flesh and blood clashing. It's one on one without support from snipers or anyone like that – it's key to stimulating competition. Each move has a cost. You have to pay frames to pull off the move. Nothing is unfair."

Then it gets serious. We grab arcade sticks, highlight Guy, and pick his *black* costume. Ono brings out Juri. He probably isn't aware that we've been practicing for the past week. But we have. And we beat him. He even comments on our play, saying, "Your Guy is *smooth*." Deeply humbled, we beat him again, this time with Ultra Finishes, before asking him to Dragon Punch us. Of course, he obliges. *Bok.*

An in-game screen reveals Owen's uncanny alter-ego...

Keep perspective PSM3's Owen Hill (right) suffers for beating his hero Ono (left).

1998 Half-Life

1999 Pokémon Red and Blue

2000 Shenmue

2001 Devil May Cry

2001 Halo: Combat Evolved

2002 GTA: Vice City

2003 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

2005 God of War

"One of the funniest games ever made"
Monkey Island 2 page 20

Game on GMXS takes you deeper into your games, and features a new retro section.

GamesMaster magazine gets bold new look

Our sister magazine evolves with a brand new design

GamesMaster, the UK's biggest-selling and most exciting multiformat games magazine, has been around for 17 years. This month it's getting its most ambitious redesign yet, with brand new sections and features, and a bold new look. Issue 226 will be available from Friday May 21. In it you'll find 116 pages of brand new content including a review of *Red Dead Redemption*, the new GMXS section and the Hall of Fame, a buyer's guide for every system.

The new GamesMaster will also cover a lot more games than before, with mobile and social networking game coverage, as well as regular spots for PlayStation Network content and games. The magazine costs £3.99 and will be in all good newsagents on the 21st – and, mercifully, Dexter Fletcher doesn't get a look in.

Looking good A few sneak peeks at Gamesmaster's new design.

Gaming has evolved...
So have we...
The UK's biggest-selling multi-format magazine has got a great new look

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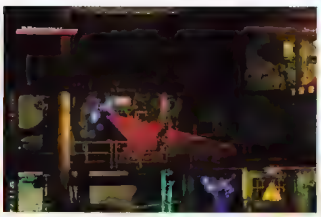
Revealed: Tomorrow's potential classics. Today

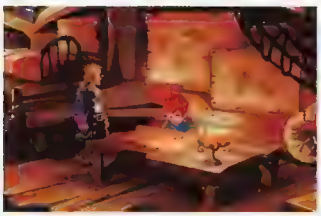


PSN Rush'n Attack: Ex-Patriot Straight from the 1980s

Details **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Vatra Games | **Genre** Action

Lowdown This PSN action game is a remake of classic '80s side-scroller *Rush'n Attack*, released in the UK as *Green Beret*. Set just after the Cold War, it sees a lone soldier knifing and blasting his way through swathes of Russians to rescue an ally trapped behind enemy lines. Unlike most side-scrollers on PSN, this isn't a straight-up shoot-'em-up: your character, Sergeant Sid Morrow, favours his trusty knife over guns, and charges through enemies with powerful melee attacks. The slick presentation and arcade gameplay show promise.

ETA Autumn

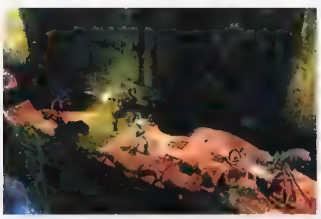
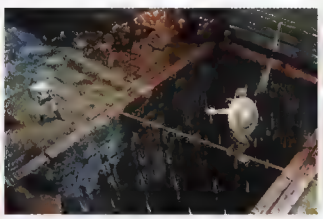
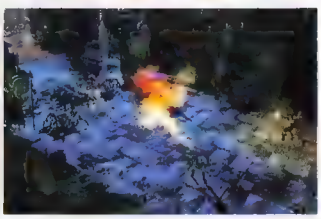


PSN Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Yarrgh!

Details **Pub** LucasArts | **Dev** LucasArts | **Genre** Adventure

Lowdown Criminally, PS3 missed out on last year's stunning HD remake of *The Secret of Monkey Island* but, mercifully, we're getting the sequel. This is one of the funniest, smartest games ever made, with fiendishly cryptic puzzles and endlessly quotable dialogue. And now you can enjoy it with full voice acting, completely redone high definition visuals and a handy hint system if you get stuck – which you *will*.

ETA Summer

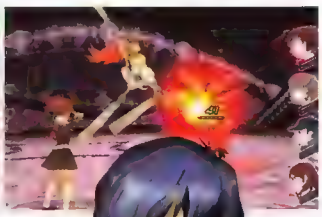




PSN Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light It takes two, baby

Details **Pub** Square Enix | **Dev** Crystal Dynamics | **Genre** Action

Lowdown It may star Lara Croft, but this is no *Tomb Raider*. *Guardian of Light* is a PSN only title with a focus on arcade co-op gameplay. It sees Lara and new partner Totec, a Mayan tribesmen, traversing familiar *Raider*-style environments, but from a top-down perspective and with simplified controls: movement on the left stick, firing on the right. It's the co-op puzzles that are most interesting. In one example, Lara fires her grappling hook across a chasm and Totec uses it as a tightrope to cross safely (see above).

ETA Summer

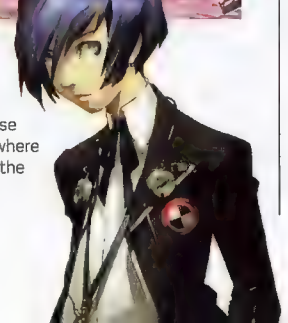


PSP Persona 3 Portable A handheld epic

Details **Pub** TBC | **Dev** Atlus | **Genre** RPG

Lowdown This is a direct port of the PS2 version of *Persona 3* (which we awarded 90% in issue 110), but with a smattering of additional content. The biggest change is that you can now choose between a male and female character, which radically alters the game's Social Links: a system where your character's combat abilities are dictated by relationships with other characters. It's one of the most inventive RPGs of recent years, although rather grind-heavy, which is perfect for PSP.

ETA Autumn



The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy

"Making your own levels and characters? Yeah!"

I don't know about you, but I'm eagerly awaiting the new dawn of customisation in games. When character, track and level editors will outnumber actual gameplay content. When you'll slide a disc into your console and be presented with a blank screen and a pen tool and asked to draw your own menus.

I don't want professional developers, with their 'experience' and 'talent', making my games: I want to clumsily piece them together myself from assorted bits and bobs in hard-to-use editing software.

I want to somehow create something even marginally professional-looking using an imprecise analogue stick. Then I want to share it online and have one person play it, before leaving a comment telling me how shit it is.

Making time

Yeah, that's the future, alright. 'Play, create, share', as Media Molecule put it. One day we'll play a racing game, and the track selection screen will connect to an online browser of user-created circuits. And 90% of them will be unplayable, because people are idiots and will litter the servers with half-finished tracks, or ones designed specifically to be as hard as possible.

Until I'm carving my own case out of plastic and burning my own discs on my BD-R drive, I won't be happy. This is the age of the 'Net, where quality control is *everything*. Let's take advantage of it.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Do you like user generated content?
psm3@futurenet.com

Join FIFA 10's My Live Season

Bag yourself a trip to Wembley and the glory of the goal of the month...

It's that time of the season when serious silverware starts getting handed out. Manchester United have already picked up the League Cup, while the FA Cup and Champions League finals are just weeks away. Oh, and there's the small matter of England's almost certain penalty bow-out at the World Cup in June.

Not to be left out, we've got our own prize to give away, as EA Sports and GamesRadar's My Live Season competition builds up for a big finish. Each week we've been running a goal of the week competition at **www.gamesradar.co.uk/myliveseason**. The rules are simple – play our chosen game from the weekend's Premier League fixtures and upload your best goal to the internet. Send us the link and if we reckon it's the best of the lot you win an EA game of your choice.

The competition is still running, and the really big news is that the best goal of the entire season will win two tickets to the FA Cup final at Wembley on 15 May. Even if you've not entered yet, you've still got time to get your goal in before the competition ends. Head over to **www.gamesradar.co.uk/myliveseason** for all the details. Good luck!

If you've been enjoying My Live Season then why not try out *FIFA 10*'s new club-building card game, Ultimate Team. The managerial collect 'em up has gamers buying and swapping player cards to build their dream side, and is available on both PlayStation Store and Xbox Live right now.

Enter our My Live Season Competition now at
www.gamesradar.co.uk/myliveseason
EA SPORTS

TBC

FROM THE MAKERS OF GRAND THEFT AUTO

RED DEAD REDEMPTION™

OUTLAWS TO THE END

21 MAY

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PS3 PlayStation 3 PlayStation Network XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE

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THE MOST INCREDIBLE LOOKING GAME ON PS3

CRYSIS 2

LEADS OUR SHOOTER SPECIAL

FEATURING BULLETSTORM, MEDAL OF HONOR, CALL OF DUTY, VANQUISH, BRINK MORE...

CRYSIS 2

Pub EA Dev Crytek
ETA December

Only PSM3 has seen Crysis 2 running on PS3 and how its stunning tech will change the future of shooters

Three years after *Crysis* was first released on PC, it's still the best looking game ever – and running on a top spec PC on maximum settings, that includes *Uncharted 2*. That's the magic of CryENGINE, the benchmark-setting technology that powers it – a technology now making its way to PS3 in *Crysis 2*.

CryENGINE 3 is the first version of the engine to be developed simultaneously for PC *and* consoles. This means that the PS3 version of *Crysis 2* won't be compromised or scaled back in any way. You'll enjoy the same experience as a PC gamer. For the £250 or so you paid for PS3, you can expect visuals just shy of a £2000 high-end PC. Incredible.

As the new *Call of Duty*, with its partial Vietnam setting, evokes nostalgia, *Crysis 2* sets its sights on the future. It's easily the best looking shooter on PS3, even six months before its December 2010 release. We're the only mag to see it running on Xbox and PS3 and, to our eyes, both versions were identical – though, last month, developers Crytek told us they were getting slightly better results from Sony's machine.

It's up to you

But it gets better. As well as standard-setting visuals, *Crysis 2* will be a breath of fresh air for first-person shooters in general. Forget *Call of Duty*'s linear tunnels of orchestrated action: *Crysis 2* grants you a freedom seldom seen in a big budget FPS, letting you play your own way across entire blocks of downtown New York City. But why New York? After all, it's one of the most overused settings in games. "It's an iconic city," explains the game's writer – and established sci-fi novelist – Richard Morgan. "It's emotionally symbolic. The pride of mankind. And it has a distinct emotional charge. You *want* to save it."

Crysis 2's freedom is thanks to the Nanosuit 2, a high-tech

One Shot Summary

"The Nanosuit 2 is a high-tech exoskeleton that grants you godlike powers. You can deflect bullets, turn invisible and hurl enemies to their doom"

SEE CRYSIS 2 TODAY!

Feed Disc 4 of this month's DVD into your PS3 to see the CryEngine in action. Head to the Extras menu.

Blown away The New York Stock Exchange takes a pummeling. You can't topple buildings, but you *can* significantly damage them.

exoskeleton that grants our hero – whose identity is yet to be revealed – godlike powers. He's essentially four characters in one, able to switch between different 'modes' on the fly: Infiltration, Power, Armour and Tactical.

"In *Crysis 2* you can react dynamically to your environment and decide how you want to approach the situation," explains Executive Producer Nathan Camarillo. "The Nanosuit gives you the ability to camouflage yourself, the ability to absorb bullets, the ability to move fast and jump and climb things, and the ability to scan and assess your environment. You can switch between these powers in real-time, unlike in other games."

"In just one short set-piece we saw multiple gameplay styles interacting seamlessly. The dynamic nature of the Nanosuit's powers mean you won't be cowering behind cover all the time"

Nathan shows us the Nanosuit in action, in a level set high above Lower Manhattan on a network of rooftops. "Cloak engaged", drones a robotic voice, denoting a switch to the stealthy Infiltration mode. The hero turns transparent as he stalks a patrol of enemy soldiers – a PMC (private military company) called Crynet Security who, ironically, designed your suit. We sneak up on one, grab him and snap his neck with △. But one of his buddies notices, and opens fire in our direction, forcing us to switch quickly to Armour mode.

Dust brother The streets fill with choking dust as a mysterious alien device bursts from the ground.

"Armour engaged." The bullets ping off the Nanosuit and we charge the next group of soldiers, dispatching them with a heavy-duty shotgun. "There are two central roles," says Nathan. "The hunter and the tank. This is the tank." The Nanosuit's powers have to recharge after extended use, so we disengage Armour mode, slip behind cover and switch to Tactical. This lets us track enemy movements *through* objects, with them appearing as shimmering green outlines.

The remaining enemies chew our cover up with gunfire, so a direct

NANOSUIT 2: TAILORED FOR DESTRUCTION

This is what sets *Crysis 2* apart from other shooters. The hero may look like any other masked sci-fi space marine, but it's what's *under* the mask that makes the Nanosuit 2 special.

TACTICAL

- Scan radios and cell phones for audio and video logs
- Reveal what weapons enemies are carrying
- View enemies through cover to track their movements
- Scout environments with built-in zoomable binoculars

POWER

- Grab enemies and throw them off the sides of buildings
- Use objects in the environment as melee weapons
- Smash through walls and cover
- Pick up heavy objects and use them as projectile weapons

ARMOUR

- Deflect bullets for short periods of time
- Go head-to-head with helicopters and tanks
- Confuse groups of enemies by rushing towards them

INFILTRATION

- Move silently to avoid detection
- Turn invisible for a short period of time
- Take out whole patrols of guards without them noticing

"ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, THIS NEW ENEMY CAN TOO. HE SCALES BUILDINGS, HE LEAPS OVER YOU – HE'S TOUGH"

Crytek executive producer Nathan Camarillo on consoles, aliens and skirting the edge of chaos

PSM3: As a PC developer, what's it like working with consoles for the first time?
It makes us more focused, and we really have to weigh up every decision. But that doesn't mean that we're hamstringing the game – just that we put more thought into it. When you're developing for PC you just keep throwing more and more at the game because there's no technical limitations. But you can't do that on console. You have to be smarter with your design.

PSM3: Do you ever find the limitations of the hardware frustrating?
We sometimes worry that we're going too far, but our team guys are awesome, and they always find a way to make it work. I'm like "I can't believe this is running! Okay, what else can we do?" And they just pile more on top of it. We're skirting the edge of chaos. [laughs]

PSM3: What can you tell us about the game's vision of New York City?
We're in the near future. So New York City is still a place people can identify with. It's really close in technology to where we are now. There are conventional weapons in there, but also science-tech weapons like gauss rifles, that kind of thing. We sit kinda close to traditional military shooters like *Battlefield* and *Call of Duty*, although we do have aliens, so it's an interesting mix of the classic military-style combat, but with fantastical science fiction elements.

PSM3: You fight both humans and aliens in the game. What kind of combat tactics will we have to adopt for each?
The human enemies behave a lot like you would expect them to in real life. If five guys are on patrol and one disappears, they'd be like "Hey, I haven't heard from Bob in a while. Let's go investigate." They use cover, they fight for their lives. But the aliens aren't as cautious. They're tougher, they have armour. They're more bold and daring. There are multiple classes of them, including basic footsoldiers and a brand new enemy type we can reveal exclusively to PSM3 that uses the whole 3D space during battle. This doesn't mean that he flies around, but that anything you can do with the Nanosuit, like jumping across the level and sprinting, he'll be able to do. He's a real challenge you. He scales buildings, he jumps over you. He's tough.

Nathan Camarillo is executive producer of *Crysis 2*. His previous work includes the *Red Faction* series.

PSM3: Are there any other enemy types you can reveal?
There's a big guy too, a kind of brute alien. The sandbox gameplay that you experience, we want the alien AI to play the same way. They have choices on how they navigate the environment and objects that they use. The brute will actively try and destroy or invalidate your cover. If you crouch behind a car, he'll know that it can be destroyed and will blow it up with his rockets.

Enemies also react to the type of weapons you equip. If I'm coming at the heavy guy with a pistol, he doesn't give a shit. He'll just keep coming, because that's not a threat to him. But if I picked up a rocket launcher, and I fired it, even he might take cover or try and side-step it.

PSM3: How open will the game be?
It's a kind of confined freedom it's not a completely continuous experience from beginning to end as you traverse the length of the city, because not all of that's going to be interesting. But we want to give you the best, most focused highlights. It's what we call 'veni, vidi, veci' gameplay: I came, I saw, I conquered. You get somewhere, you assess it, you figure out how you want to engage the enemy and complete your objective. We want you to be constantly saying "Holy crap, I wonder what's coming next."

PSM3: You've talked a lot about Crysis 2's 'verticality' – can you explain exactly what this means?
Okay, so for example, you might fight enemies on the rooftops of some skyscrapers, then continue on the streets below, all in the same level. We have a good balance of big, open, free-flowing spaces, and other areas that are tall and vertical – but more confined – that offer you a lot of different gameplay styles.

That's one of the great things about New York City: it has a diversity of layouts. Some areas are really wide open, others are more claustrophobic and confined. This gives us plenty of opportunity for varied level design.

PSM3: What's so special about the Nanosuit 2?
It's what our game's all about. We have this unique sandbox approach, and the Nanosuit is the mechanism that gives you these temporary godlike powers.

In a multi-player game you choose a class – I'll be the recon guy, or the sniper – and you're stuck with that until you die. But in *Crysis 2* you can react dynamically to the environment that you're in and decide how you want to react. You're changing your 'class' in real-time.

HOW IT SHAPES THE FUTURE OF PS3

Get used to graphics this good – CryENGINE 3 is set to become the industry's favourite licensed graphics technology

Epic's Unreal 3 engine is everywhere, powering games as disparate as *BioShock* and *Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust*. This is because it's cheap to license, easy to use and works well on consoles. But now Crytek are offering CryENGINE 3 as a much more sophisticated, better looking alternative. So don't be surprised if games as good looking as *Crysis* become the norm. Here are some of the tricks CryENGINE 3 has up its sleeve, with comments from Crytek producer Nathan Camarillo...

Real-time dynamic global illumination
This lets developers make the transition from day to night in real-time. "You only have to author one set of assets (textures) and can still change how the game looks."

Deferred lighting
This brings levels to life with multiple light sources, like spotlights on helicopters shining across the environment at night. "We've only just got this working on consoles. It lets you have a large number of dynamic lights in the environment without affecting performance."

Flexibility
"CryENGINE 3 is so powerful you can make any kind of game you want. You could make a sports game, a racing game - any kind of game. As more footage of the engine gets out and we talk more about it, we're really going to be turning heads."

Colour grading
"This lets us change the entire mood of the scene. At the beginning of the game it'll be bright and sunny, and there's a lot of hope. But then as we get further into the game and you're in the thick of it, there's more of a feeling of despair."

attack is our best option. We switch to Power mode, granting us incredible strength, and rip a mounted gun from a nearby wall. The weapon tears the environment to pieces and makes short work of the last few soldiers. Then the demo fades to black – the game is still very much work in progress, however impressive.

It just makes regular military shooters look, well, old. In just one set-piece we saw multiple gameplay styles, all interacting seamlessly. The dynamic nature of the Nanosuit's powers means you won't be forced to cower behind cover all the time, the bane of the FPS genre. "Other games give you tactical information; others just give you weapons, others give you armour – but they don't give you all of these in one package like we do", explains Nathan.

Style guide

Those visuals, then. CryENGINE 3 rivals *Killzone 2's* scale and *Uncharted 2's* rich textures; amplified by the most realistic particle effects we've ever seen. The quality of the lighting and shadows, and the scale of Manhattan's skyscrapers, give it an incredibly natural, photorealistic look – like the way sunlight diffuses as it leaks through the thick cloud of dust that shrouds the ruined city. When the city is torn apart by gunfire, the destruction physics and particle effects look eerily real. Trust us, it's astonishing.

The urban environment also opens up new gameplay opportunities. "The cool thing about being in a city is that there's a tonne of objects to interact with. It's a density that wasn't present in the original *Crysis*' jungle setting," explains Nathan Camarillo. "There are so many items to use as weapons. If I switched to Power mode I could pick up a lamp post and attack enemies with it. People are going to come up with some crazy stuff once the game is released."

Telling tales

Crysis 2 will have a worthwhile storyline too. Crytek are remaining tight-lipped to avoid spoilers, but aliens have invaded New York and you're here to drive them out and save the city. "We want you to feel like you've just jumped from a plane with no parachute," reveals writer Richard Morgan. "You'll be in a narrative freefall, and there'll be a sense of real unpredictability. We've got a really twisty, turny plot." Nathan Camarillo goes into more detail: "There are a lot of story threads. What has happened in New York City? What will happen if I don't survive? Why do I have this Nanosuit? Why am I fighting this PMC? What's their motive?"

A lot of questions, then. But there's no question that *Crysis 2* is the hottest shooter of 2010. New York might be a familar location to PS3 owners, but – to paraphrase 'ol blue eyes – if Crytek can make it there, you'll *definitely* want to be part of it come *Crysis 2's* December 2010 release.

Back to the future The game is set 13 years in the future in the aftermath of an alien attack that's left New York's streets barren and abandoned. Hence, no pedestrians.

Anticipation

"You divide time between spec ops badasses and rangers who attack with brute force"

One Shot Summary

MEDAL OF HONOR

Pub EA Dev EA LA/DICE
ETA September

Made from only the finest cuts of modern shooters

Medal Of Honor is the new *Modern Warfare*. And not because all of Activision's developers are jumping ship to EA. *Meow*. In fact, it's more than *MW* – potentially much more. The game is split into two. Single-player is a story-focused affair that sees you dividing time between Tier 1 forces – spec ops badasses that operate quietly and effectively behind enemy lines – and regular rangers who use brute force.

It's what the US army, who have been heavily involved with development, refer to as the 'Hammer and Scalpel'. The 'hammer' is the regular marines who smash the enemy en masse, using high-tech weapons and support vehicles such as the AH-64 apache (confirmed for the game). The 'scalpel' is the Tier 1 operatives who infiltrate key enemy positions, use night-vision goggles and [illegible] bs (C4 rigged with a mobile [illegible] anyone?), and dress like locals to blend in. Think of the Taskforce 141 levels from *MW2*, only more fleshed out and frequent. Combined with the regular marine missions, they'll lend the single player variety and a satisfying ebb and flow.

In bad company

While EA LA beaver away on the campaign, *Battlefield* developers DICE are crafting the multi-player. And although we expect it to be different to *Bad Company 2*, we've no doubt common elements will make their way across. Character development, weapon unlocks, massive destruction – they're all dead certs for *MOH* online.

It's a heady combination. EA are cherry-picking the best bits from the crème of modern shooters, adding a touch of realism (not too much, just enough to avoid the nonsense plot that plagued *MW2* without making the action stale) and bundling them into a single game. Essential.

CALL OF DUTY 7

Pub Activision Dev Treyarch
ETA November

Zombies, 'Nam and Korea are rumoured for this historic shooter in the making

Full *Call Of Duty* details are due any day, but until then, we can tell you what we know. And by 'know', you should read: 'are allowed to say without Activision's lawyers being unleashed upon us'. Hopefully they're, er, busy.

Hot rumours suggest the game will be called **Call Of Duty: Black Ops** and... we wouldn't bet against it. The same rumour also came with word that the game will skip between time periods that span from the Vietnam War to the early '80s. **Vietnam** is a shoo-in, and while we're not sure *where* the game will go, we do know this isn't the only location, or time period.

That would allow Treyarch to dip into 'Nam, the Falklands and several African nation conflicts, so the scope is huge. They could even take things a little further back and visit the Korean War, a bloody part of history that's never made it into games before. Given Treyarch's drive to step out of Infinity Ward's shadow by doing something different (a prime example being the Pacific setting in *WAW*), Korea starts to seem likely.

Whatever the setting, the **zombies co-op** mode will make a return. Many cite it as the best part of *World At War*, and it's still a very active multi-player mode. Treyarch would be barking to make a new *COD* without it.

Another thing that seems set in stone is the release date. A supposed leak from GAME listed *Call Of Duty 7* as a **November release**. This has traditionally been the month of release for *Call Of Duty* games since the very first game arrived for PC on November 7, 2003.

VANQUISH

Pub Sega Dev Platinum Games
ETA October

Faster than Modern Warfare, more explosive than Killzone. PSM3 is first to play Shinji Mikami's incredible new shooter

We're crouched behind a slab of polished metal having a moment of serious indecision. It's 60 seconds into our world-exclusive hands on with Shinji (*Resi 4*, *Devil May Cry* creator) Mikami's latest project, *Vanquish*, and we find ourselves at the start of Act 1, Scene 3. It's a vast metallic arena, and all around us things are exploding, men are screaming and red Russian robots are pouring out of everywhere. There's so much happening all at once, and the screen is filled with sparks and micro-explosions. It's the sort of scene you'd expect to make your PS3 chug, but *Vanquish* is running smooth and fast. Terrifyingly fast, actually, which is why we're crouched behind this bit of metal. We don't know where to begin. It's like the busiest scenes in *Modern Warfare 3*, where the action seems to have reached a deafening crescendo – only

One Shot Summary

"All around us things are exploding and men are screaming"

How PSM3 broke Vanquish to the world

PSM3 brought you first details on Resistance 2 and creator Shinji Mikami's new shoot 'em up Vanquish in PSM3 125, with a live report from the Platinum Games studio in Japan. Now, we're proud to present the world first play of Vanquish and look forward to more exclusive coverage in future issues.

this is a snapshot of the very *first* level in the game.

After only a couple of seconds we're forced out of our indecision by the arrival of a grenade, expertly lobbed at our feet by an enemy. Uh-oh – time to move. We tap ◎ and push forward, making our man – Sam Gideon – leap over cover. As he vaults into the open we hold down L2, and as the shots start to spit from our assault rifle time slows. We use this to line-up a bunch of nearby Soviet bots and by the time Sam hits the ground, they're already in a mess of burnt metal and electric discharge. It's definitely the coolest thing we've ever done in a shooter, but there's no time to stand and reflect.

> "The air fills with more particles, but Vanquish refuses to drop its pace"

Better dead than Red

The bullets are flying at us, and we start to see a smattering of red smears on the screen. Time slows again – a neat trick to let you know that it's time to either hide or die – so we hold L1 and use Sam's suit-boost ability to zip across the map to relative safety, hitting R1 to reload as he leaps behind cover. Our AI squad mates half-kill a nearby bot, blowing off its legs – but it refuses to die. Dragging itself along the ground Terminator-style, the robot approaches us and self-destructs. That hurts. Although we're partly shielded, some of our buddies aren't so lucky. We sprint over to the nearest, tap ◎ and slam a syringe into their downed body, reviving them. We're rewarded with a handful of grenades, which we instantly put to use on a cluster of enemies hiding behind a crate. Boom. The air fills with more particles, but *Vanquish* refuses to drop its pace.

Chrome and gun-ishment **When you change weapons by tapping a direction on the d-pad, your existing gun rapidly transforms into the new one. It's a slick animation.**

Still glows If in doubt aim for the bits that glow. Classic Japanese game development

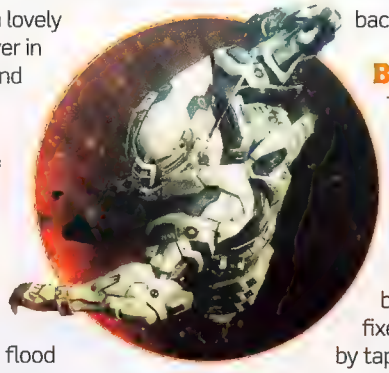
Face off Boost is limited, and it takes a few seconds to recharge, so you can't just zoom around willy-nilly.

Argus catalogue This is the first, 'easier' form of the Argus boss. Those mini-missiles are quite easy to dodge, but the laser that shoots from its core is trickier to avoid.

High kick Boost right up to an enemy and tap ◎ for a savage kick or uppercut melee kill. It looks awesome.

Tapping ↑ on the d-pad, we switch to the Heavy Machine Gun and take aim at the pilot of a nearby mech. Once we've blown him off his perch, we boost over and hijack the mech. Sam punches a few commands into the piloting console – a lovely animation that's over in under a second – and we're in complete control. Its heavy cannon rains death onto the surviving Russians. But they're instantly reinforced, as a nearby gate opens and fresh mechanical horrors flood in. Our mech's ammo runs out just as we scrap the last of the reinforcements, so we hop out and take cover on the balcony surrounding the arena we've just been fighting in.

Sam receives an incoming call from his support agent, Elena. The bad news: there's a giant enemy burrowing up through the ground, and it wants to kick our ass. The worse news: it's bristling with weapons. The good news: it sacrificed armour to fit on all the extra instruments of death, so – in theory – we can kill it. Cheers Elena. The second she signs off, the Argus bursts through the floor and immediately guns down two of our rapidly dwindling squad. End of cut-scene, now we're back into the action.



Boss time

The Argus wastes no time in sending over a salvo of mini-missiles, which cloud the air like arrows in a scene from 300. We quickly boost to a nearby fixed turret and man it by tapping ◎. From here we zoom by holding L2, and start peppering a glowing weakspot on the Argus – its spider-like legs. One appendage explodes in a shower of sparks, dropping the robot long enough for us to take pot shots at its exposed core. It heaves its body back up, sparks still raining from the stump we blew off. We take aim at another leg and repeat the process.

That makes Argus mad. It transforms into a humanoid shape and fires a huge laser beam from its eye. Split-second timing sees us leap from our turret to safety, as the beam wrecks half the balcony. We dash back to the area where we started the level, scouring crates for ammo. Interestingly, if you've already maxed out a weapon's ammo, any excess you collect gives you more powerful bullets. Handy. We boost up to Argus' new legs and go to work with the shotgun. Again he goes down, again we attack his core. He hobbles back up and tries to smash us with a giant fist, before unleashing a salvo of *even bigger* missiles. By tapping evade (⊗) at the last second we trigger a QTE. Sam leaps into the air, dodges one missile, dodges a second, then grabs a third and slam-dunks it into Argus' arm. Boom. We finish off his core with our rifle. One explosion later and we're staring at the end of stage stat screen.

Enemies killed 52. Times died zero. Friendlies revived two... the list goes on. As we stare at the screen, we have another moment of indecision. Should we play again on Normal? Or Hard? More certainly, there's nothing like *Vanquish* on any console; fusing *Modern Warfare 2's* byte-size Spec Ops missions to *Bayonetta* wild bosses, with unique, compelling, aggression.

HOMEFRONT

Pub THQ **Dev** Kaos Studios
ETA Autumn 2010

Exclusive interview: how the man who wrote Apocalypse Now, and something called the 'Drama Engine' are combining to create one of the year's most intense shooters

You might not know about THQ's big 2010 shooter *Homefront*... but after this year's E3 games show, we confidently predict that'll change. Think *Killzone*'s intensity meets *Half Life*'s emotive storytelling, as Dave Votypka, Kaos Studios' General Manager explains...

PSM3: What's Homefront?
DV: *Homefront* is set in America 20 years in the future, and Americans are living under foreign occupation. In single-player, you fight as the resistance, and we've been working with John Milius (writer of Apocalypse Now) to flesh out that world. The multi-player will be later on in the timeline and features huge armies on a larger-scale.

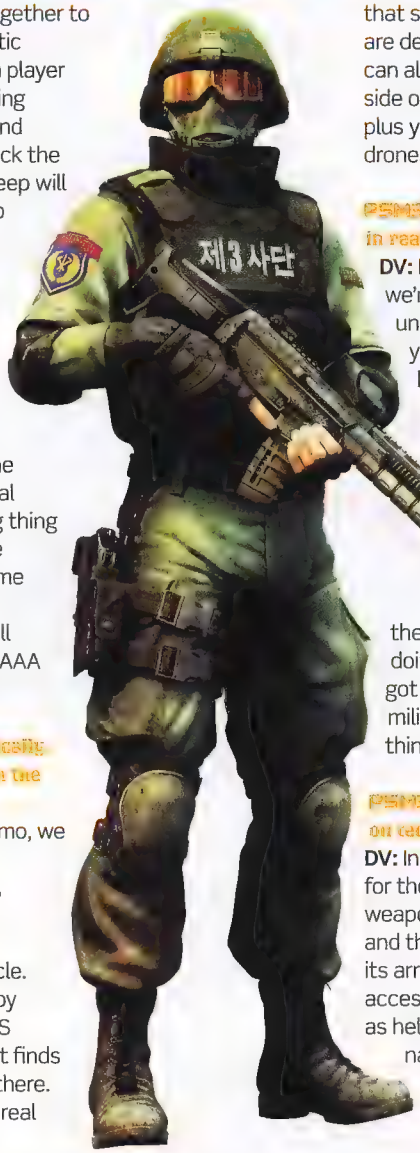
PSM3: The demo (shown behind closed doors at E3 2009) was really intense. What's the secret of its success?
DV: We're using something called the Drama Engine; a collection of five or six smaller features that come together to create really dynamic, cinematic action. In the demo we show a player shooting a rocket at an incoming enemy jeep, which flips over and careens towards them. We track the position of the player, so the jeep will always come towards them no matter where they're stood. We want to make the game intense and bring the action into the player's face.

Anticipation

Then there's little things like the gunplay, and the environmental narrative – which is a really big thing for us. With our previous game (*Frontlines*) we spent a long time getting the engine to where it needed to be, but now we're all about fine tuning and getting AAA quality out of the technology.

PSM3: How will the technologically advanced setting be reflected in the gameplay?
DV: In the demo, we show an autonomous, six-wheeled, unmanned combat vehicle. You direct it by giving it a GPS co-ordinate. It finds its own way there. It's based on real prototypes that several real world manufacturers are developing for the US military. You can also fix a targeting device to the side of your rifle and give it commands, plus you'll get recon drones, assault drones and other unmanned vehicles.

Crushing blow You'll get to order this six-wheeled beast around by using GPS co-ordinates, or by pointing out targets with your rifle.



PSM3: Will your weaponry be grounded in reality or more futuristic?
DV: It'll be both. One of the things we're doing is having a progressive unlock system for the weapons, so you'll start with the weapons you know from today – the M4s and shotguns – and as you play through you'll not only unlock new weapons, but you'll also take the ones you've got up the futurisation tree. Richard Mackwoods from Future Weapons on the Discovery Channel has been doing a lot of work for us, so we've got some of the best tech that the military is using and currently thinking about.

PSM3: Can we expect more emphasis on technology when playing online?
DV: In the single-player you're fighting for the resistance, so you get your weapons from raids on military bases and things like that. In the multi-player its army versus army, so you'll have full access to all the best weapons as well as helicopters, jets and things of that nature. It's similar to what we've done before in things like *Frontlines*. Our goal is to lead the large-scale warfare genre.

BODYCOUNT

Pub [illegible] **Dev** [illegible]
ETA [illegible]

Losing everything, all the time. The title is the game

"If it feels like it should break, it generally does", is how Producer Stuart Black describes *Bodycount*'s epic scenery destruction. A risk-reward combo system, online play and shotgun-blasted level shortcuts will all help Black's aim to "make players feel happy after a hard day at work".

Anticipation

Black ops [illegible]

RAGE

Pub [illegible] **Dev** [illegible]
ETA [illegible]

Essential elements of an ugly post-apocalypse world

You need to know two things about *Rage*. First it's made by id, who created *Quake* and *Doom*. They know how to make an FPS, and this post-apocalyptic shooter sees them on form. Second, it's desert wasteland setting is stunning. You explore it on foot, or for longer distances, via custom buggies.

Anticipation

No mutants allowed [illegible]

QUANTUM THEORY

Tougher than actual quantum theory

One Shot Summary

Yes – *Quantum Theory* looks very similar to *Gears of War*. Our exclusive hands-on this month does little to change that opinion, but when you're taking cues from one of the biggest in the industry, blatant copy-catting isn't a bad thing.

You play as Syd (er, yes) as he infiltrates a living tower to destroy its core. Simple enough goal, but then Syd is a simple chap: he likes killing and looking hard. Controls are very much as you'd expect. ⊗ snaps to cover, L2 aims, R2 shoots. You switch weapons via the d-pad and use ◎ to dodge attacks. Score a headshot and the camera zooms in on your victim, letting you watch his cranium explode in slow-motion. Nice.

Schlock and load

The variety of weapons is impressive, and combined with the setting – which brings more than just brown corridors and concrete arenas – is what sets *Quantum* apart. Sure, there are recognisable staples like assault rifles and rockets, but also cannons that shoot balls of flame, rapid-fire grenade launchers and mine-guns.

Right now combat is *seriously* tough and even early on the enemies aggressively attack your hiding places and mercilessly fill you with bullets. No bad thing, we enjoy a challenge, but too much early pressure might deter less dedicated players from cracking into the tower sections, which are where *Quantum Theory* comes into its own. Its here you find the big, weird bosses and the stages that ask you to do more than hide behind cover and pop out to bust heads. One level sees the ground falling away behind you, as enemies rush from the front – it's hard, but it beats sitting back and winning a war of attrition.

Based on this early play, its obvious *Quantum Theory* needs a lot of polish. The nuts and bolts of a good game are in place, and the tower sections keep things fresh, but right now it can't quite match shooters like *Vanquish* and *Brink* for sci-fi thrills.

Anticipation

This is Filena, after an initial tussle she joins you

Core blimey Once you get into the tower, *QT* becomes much more than a *Gears* clone.

"He's a gruff, pulp hero – a heavy-drinking misogynist with a heart of gold"

One Shot Summary

Bulletstorm is an OTT FPS that thinks taking cover is cowardly, and sniping is for babies. It gets you into the thick of the action, by rewarding overblown melee kills and preposterous combos. We can't wait to see more

Pub EA Dev Epic
ETA 2011

BULLET STORM

EA's frantic Bulletstorm predicts heavy melee, with a smattering of human guts

Grayson Hunt isn't the kind of man to let an old grudge easily die. He's a gruff, pulp hero – a heavy-drinking misogynist with a heart of gold that's incredibly well buried. He was sacked from his job as an elite assassin after refusing to pull the trigger on an innocent, and was unfairly forced into a life of piratical exile when his boss, the charismatic and villainous General Sarrano, declared him a traitor to the Confederation. So, when Hunt discovers the warbird of his old, hated employer ten years later – he naturally steers his ship suicidally into its

Gag reflex Combos are titled to keep in tune with the pulpy tone and the protagonist's manly ways.

engines. Hey - we've all done stuff when we're drunk, right?

Danger zone

Both crafts are disabled, and launch escape pods onto the nearby planet of Stygia. This turns out to be a mysterious and lethal place – a place, like Avatar's Pandora, where the local flora can poison and devour you. A place, like *BioShock*'s Rapture, which was once an idyllic Utopia, but has fallen to some mysterious epidemic. It's also a place where you'll find an extensive range of ridiculous, but creative weaponry.

That's because *Bulletstorm* is all about killing with style. Devs People Can Fly aren't content to let you hide behind cover and pick off a couple of distant pixels with a sniper scope. So, they've removed the cover mechanism that their mammoth backers, Epic Games, virtually invented – the cover system that's become a shooter standard.

Instead, they've seriously upgraded the melee combat, and are encouraging you to use it. The kick attack doesn't just send your victim sprawling, it does it in slow

Burner There are already over a hundred special ways to kill - and they're still thinking of more.

"Kick attacks don't just send your victim sprawling, they do so in slow motion, giving you a chance to execute a headshot"

BioShocking You'll even get to bring structures down on enemy's heads.

motion, giving you a chance to execute a better-scoring headshot. And if there's no-one in range, you can either bring them into range with your energy whip, or take yourself into the action battle using a jet-powered slide.

The choice is yours

Coupled with the environmental hazards, and the ridiculous weapons, you're given huge scope for creative mayhem. On a very basic level, you can chain headshots, decapitate someone with a bolas, or kick them into a cactus. But even that's not getting into the spirit of the game. You can bring structures down on people, use the aggressive and unfussy plants to devour the feral gang members, or attach grenades to a guy, and kick him into a crowd.

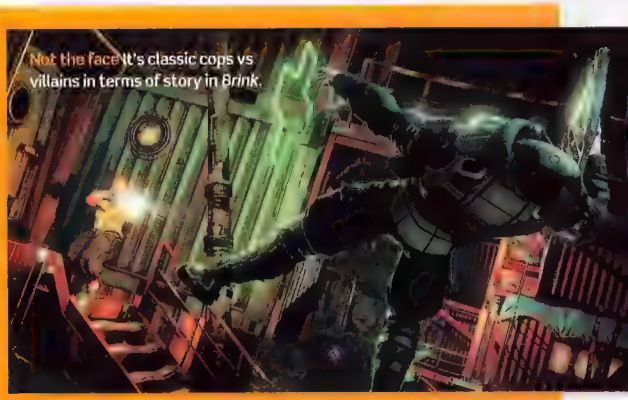
At the more disturbing end of the game's special moves, there's "Mercy". This involves putting a bullet in the head of a man who you may have - accidentally, of course - just shot in the genitals. Then there's "Boy Toy" – which involves the above, but also with some meaty lashes from your energy whip. It's a dark and sexy world, in the brains of People Can Fly.

The points you earn from your stylish kills can be spent on upgrades, such as the Peacemaker Carbine's ability to fire a hundred bullets at once. Or the energy whip's Thumper attack, which explodes an area of ground, sending everyone flying in slow motion. While they're hanging around up there, you can either pick them off with your gun for a basic and disappointing kill, or set off some explosives for a ten times more profitable combo kill.

Anticipation

Bulletstorm doesn't do anything to calm the debate about virtual violence, but to anyone with a fraction of a brain, it's big, brash, dumb fun. And besides, anything that encourages you to kick someone into a carnivorous plant instead of lazily shooting them with another gun... well, that's got to be good for the imagination, hasn't it?

These tongues can bring down a chopper – imagine what they'll do to your enemies.



Not the face It's classic cops vs villains in terms of story in *Brink*.

BRINK

Pub Bethesda **Dev** Splash Damage
ETA September

Games like *Battlefield: BC2* have taught devs a valuable lesson about online play. Reward players, or else. *Brink* rewards by bringing an RPG style XP system into the online arena. It awards more XP to players who tackle objectives crucial to the success of their team, rather than glory-hounds who sit back and inflate their kill/death ratio. It also takes co-op to a new level. The game has one story mode that players can tackle alone, with friends (in co-op), or with friends, against other human players. The shooting is solid, and the visuals are *Killzone 2* standard impressive. Hands on next month, all being well.

Anticipation ❚❚❚❚❚

Team player

KANE & LYNCH 2: DOG DAYS

Pub Square Enix **Dev** IO Interactive
ETA August

Forget the duff original – Cloverfield and YouTube provide PS3's oddest duo with a fresh perspective

"The world needs more Kane and Lynch," claim IO Interactive, and based on our first hands-on – softening our memory of the mediocre prequel – we're inclined to agree. The sequel's third mission finds the unhinged duo under siege in a Shanghai restaurant. As Lynch (the longer haired, mad one), now the central character, we duck out of cover and punch through walls with meaty shotgun blasts; law enforcement agents absorb the hits, get tossed through the air and scattered over tabletops.

Back to basics

Despite improved shooting and cover systems the mechanics aren't revolutionary, but the way in which the action is viewed is a revelation. Gone is the Hollywood gloss of other high-budget shooters. In is the low fidelity look of an average price digital camera. As a result the game struggles for impact in static shots but in motion it's like a heavyweight truck pushing 90. Alright. 70.

Added to the grimy feel, an impressive variety of filters and effects make the visuals rough around the edges, making the action feel more real. Heavy fire and brutal impacts cause a blur of pixels; a loud report causes the microphone to stutter; kinetic action scenes leave the viewfinder struggling to keep up but never losing its mark. Its furiously exciting, closer to eyewitness YouTube clips than a Michael Bay action fest.

Add in new online co-op, the return of the fragile alliance multi-player mode, that lets you betray your mates at the last second of matches, and Jason 'son of Sean' Connery as a twitchy ex East End crime lord and this is a promising sequel in the mould of classic heist movies.

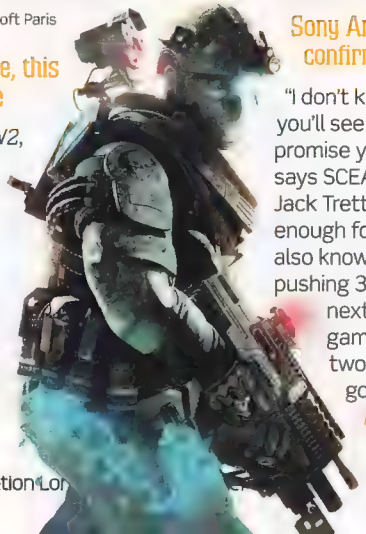
GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER

Pub Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Paris
ETA October

Forget Modern Warfare, this is the future of warfare

Ten years on from *GRAW2*, *Future Solider* has you fighting Russian ultranationalists as the Ghosts. Co-op, class-based single-player and gadgets like stealth cloaks and UAVs are planned. Move support has been rumoured.

Anticipation



KILLZONE 3-D?

Pub Sony **Dev** Guerrilla
ETA 2011

Sony America president confirms third game

"I don't know whether you'll see it at E3, but I promise you a *Killzone 3*" says SCEA president Jack Tretton. Clear enough for you? We also know Sony is pushing 3D for its next round of games. Add the two, and you've got *Killzone 3D*.

Anticipation

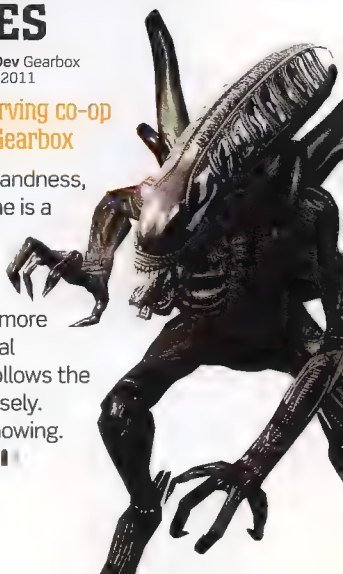
ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

Pub Sega **Dev** Gearbox
ETA March 2011

Genuinely unnerving co-op shooter from Gearbox

Forget *AVP*'s blandness, this aliens game is a cracking FPS from the creators of *Borderlands*. It's more of a co-op survival shooter, and it follows the original films closely. Expect an E3 showing.

Anticipation



Back to reality The screenshots might look a bit dull, but *Dog Days* looks truly distinctive in motion.

Anticipation

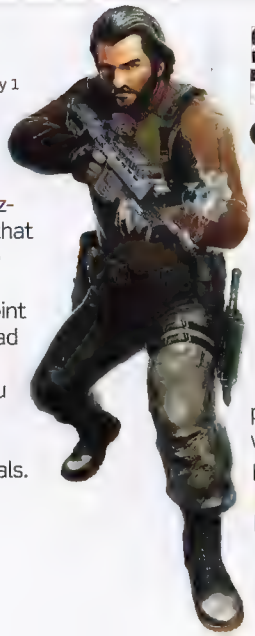
F3AR

Pub Warner Bros. **Dev** Day 1
ETA March 2011

Brings competitive co-op and scares to FPS

Divergent co-op is the buzz-phrase in *F.E.A.R. 3*. What that means is that you play the game with a mate (one controls spec-ops dude Point Man, the other psychic dead chap Paxton Fettel) but as an uneasy partnership. You compete, withhold items from each other, and are motivated by your own goals. Interesting concept.

Anticipation



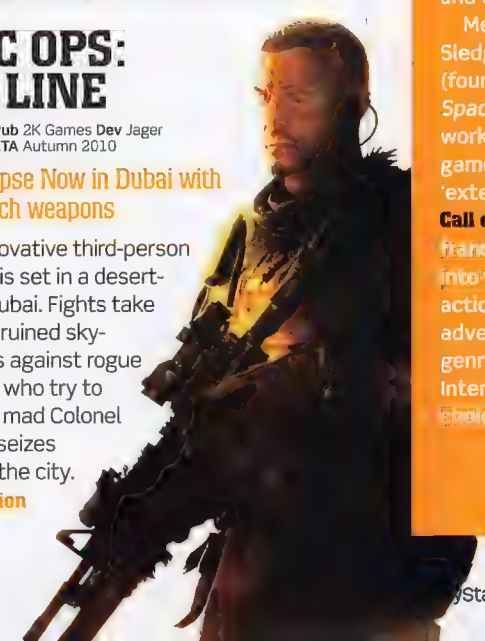
SPEC OPS: THE LINE

Pub 2K Games **Dev** Jager
ETA Autumn 2010

Apocalypse Now in Dubai with high-tech weapons

This innovative third-person shooter is set in a desert-swept Dubai. Fights take place in ruined sky-scrapers against rogue marines, who try to protect a mad Colonel when he seizes power in the city.

Anticipation



SHOOTER RUMOURS

Pay attention, 007. It seems Activision are readying their new **James Bond 007** game for an E3 unveiling. In development at Bizarre Creations, along with another unannounced project, we could see this varied adventure as early as October.

Also readying a fresh action game is EA. Crafty news-hounds have unearthed a trademark for a new **Syndicate** game, which suggests this sci-fi remake, in development at Starbreeze is due for an unveiling any day – unlike their mooted Jason Bourne game, which was recently canned. The original *Syndicate* was a tactical, top down action game, but it seems likely this remake will be first or third-person given Starbreeze's heritage working on *Riddick* and *The Darkness*.

Not to be left out, THQ are also due to announce a new **Red Faction** game, with a more varied – if not surprising – setting. It's likely to be the focus of their E3 efforts along with their incredibly promising new IP *Homefront*.

But what of Sony? Well, *Killzone 3* (or should that be 3D?) has already been confirmed by SCEA president Jack Tretton. However, despite hints no-one has let slip on **Resistance 3**. Chances are we won't see an announcement until late this year, but trust us, it's coming. Oh, and remember rumours of a **Starhawk**? Remember them again in time for E3.

Looking even further into the future, Jason West and Vince Zampella – former heads of Infinity Ward who were ousted by Activision, have set up a new studio called **Respawn Games**. Given that their history is in first-person shooters it isn't a stretch to say that they're working on a new action game, and that it's a big deal.

Meanwhile, Sledgehammer (founded by ex-*Dead Space* devs) are working on a game that will 'extend the **Call of Duty** franchise into the action-adventure genre'. Interesting choice of words.

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"Blur's multiplayer mode is Call of Duty: Modern Carfare." — CVG CO.UK

"One of the best online experiences of the year." — IGN

"Grown-up Mario Kart." — GAMESPOT UK

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HIGHLIGHTS

Format PSP | **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Kojima Productions | **Players** 1-6 | **Genre** Action

Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker

Build your own Metal Gear in the most ambitious *MGS* yet

Andy Kelly

Free of the financial constraints of developing a big-budget console game, Kojima has let his imagination run wild with *Peace Walker*. You play as Big Boss, who's broken away from the US military and formed a mercenary army: Militaires Sans Frontieres (MSF), or 'Soldiers Without Borders'. And you take an active role in building that army, 'finding' new recruits, base building and even making your own Metal Gear: the nuclear tanks that give the series its name.

Peace Walker is set in Costa Rica in 1974, and sees MSF hired to rid the country of a mysterious occupying army. But you have another reason for going: recruitment. Incapacitate an enemy and you can scan him with your Analyzer gadget, then evacuate him using the Fulton Recovery System: a self-inflating balloon that yanks him into the air for a waiting helicopter.

But not every enemy is worth recruiting. The Analyzer will tell you how much life they have, what kind of weapons they can use and their level. And you only have a limited supply of Fulton balloons, so you have to choose wisely. The ones that make the cut are returned to your base and can then be upgraded and levelled up, giving you access to new weapons, new items, and a stronger army. You can even 'recruit' enemy vehicles, such

MASTER MILLER

Solid Snake's mentor and friend of Big Boss. During the Shadow Moses Incident, Liquid Snake kills Miller and poses as him, fooling Snake.

HUEY

This scientist looks very similar to Hal 'Otacon' Emmerich from previous *MGS* games, which is likely no coincidence: he's voiced by the same actor, Christopher Randolph.

BIG BOSS

The world's greatest soldier. Big Boss' remains were used to make Solid Snake, Liquid Snake and Solidus Snake. He was Solid Snake's commander, and enemy, in the original *Metal Gear* games on NES and MSX.

CÉCILE

This sultry French woman is one of the new characters, but not much has been revealed about her. She reminds us of EVA from *Snake Eater*.

PAZ

Paz Ortega Andrade joins Militaries Sans Frontieres to rid her country of the occupying army. Her name means 'Peace' and she yearns for a world without war.

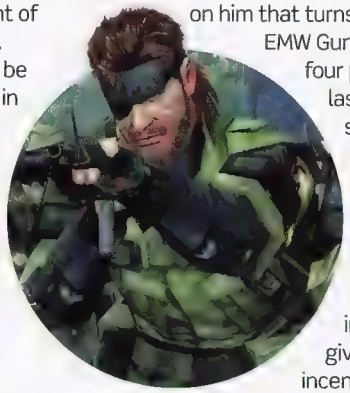
"You take an active role in building your mercenary army"

Big man The story revolves around the progenitor of the Snakes, Big Boss, so expect plot twists.

Stealth Camo Wriggling on your belly is out, but a crouch and prone position are in for your stealth-attacking needs.

as tanks and choppers. Disable them and one of your helicopters will come and scoop them up with a giant net.

Your HQ is the Mother Base, a structure in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that's reminiscent of *Metal Gear 2*'s Big Shell. Soldiers you recruit can be assigned as staff there in the following roles: combat unit, R&D team, mess hall team, medical team and intel team. What this affects in-game has yet to be revealed. You can also customise the base itself, moving the sections around to change its shape and adding new ones. Again, what effect this has, if any, remains to be seen.

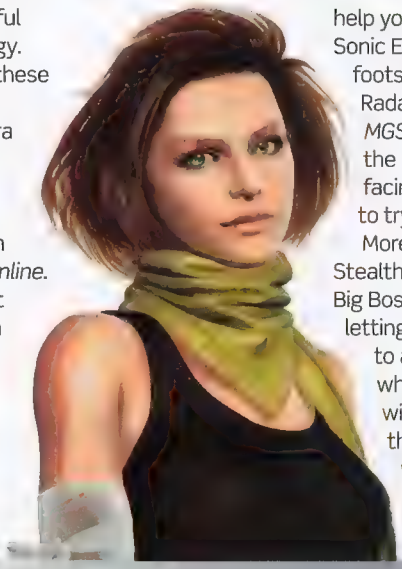


Team player

But traditional *Metal Gear* gameplay is still the main focus of *Peace Walker*. Amazingly, this is also a full-fat *MGS*, with a fleshed-out storyline, cut-scenes, boss battles and a vast array of typically inventive weapons and gadgets. And each of the game's missions can be tackled in four-player co-op, with items and mechanics designed specifically for multi-player.

Take the Stealth Gun, for example. As one player moves through the level, the other focuses a beam of blue light on him that turns him invisible. Or the EMW Gun – with this, up to four players can fire lasers that, when the streams are crossed Ghostbusters-style, can wipe out entire groups of enemies with a powerful burst of energy. You can't use these in single-player, giving you an extra incentive to try out *Peace Walker*'s Wi-Fi modes. There's six-player competitive multi-player too, with gameplay similar to *Metal Gear Online*.

But if you're a solo gamer, don't fret: it's just as great on your own as it is with friends. The level design is similar to *Snake Eater*, with jungles, swamps and mountain regions making up the bulk of environments. And the stealth gameplay is classic *MGS*, but with loads of new tools to help you fool your enemies. There's the Sonic Eye that lets you see enemy footsteps through cover, the Soliton Radar (returning from *MGS* and *MGS2*) that gives you an overview of the level and where enemies are facing, and a variety of new boxes to try out (see 'Boxing clever').



More outlandish gizmos include the Stealth Mat – a square of material that Big Boss holds up against himself, letting him turn invisible while pinned to a surface – and the Decoy, which lets you confuse enemies with a cardboard cut-out. And that's just a few examples of what the final game will offer – this is one of the most feature-packed *Metal Gears* in

NEW PLACES TO HIDE

Boxing clever

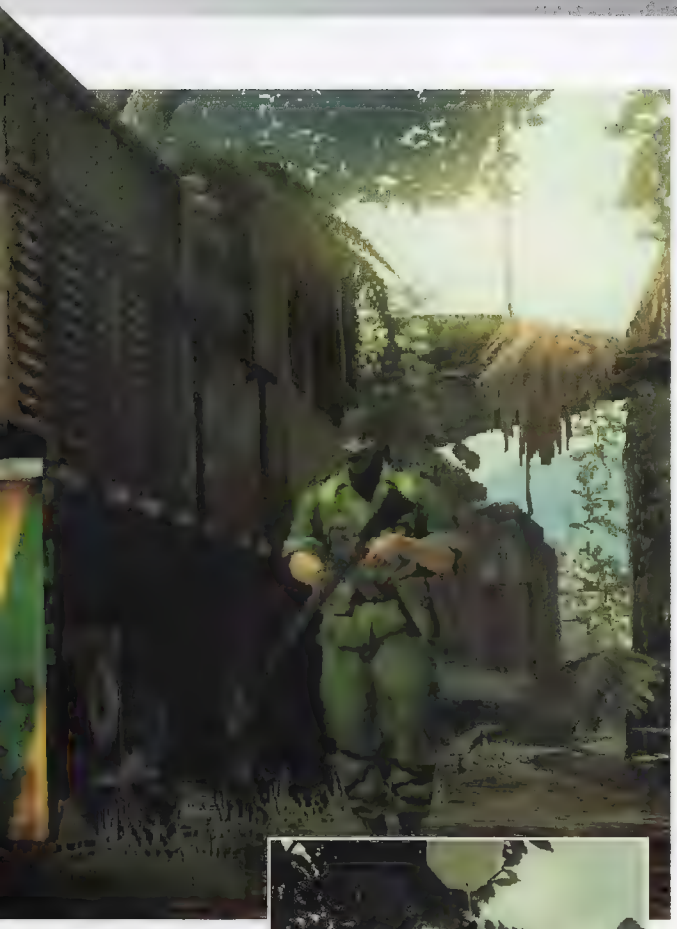
Peace Walker unpacks the role of the humble box with several new, often ridiculous, abilities

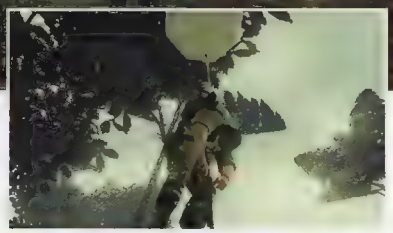
Love box Decked out in pink and adorned with a heart, the Love Pack is designed for two players to cohabit. Other than that, it functions identically to a regular one. All together now: 'Can you feel the love tonight?'

Tank box This one also fits two, but it's less of a love-in. Its special power is firing an explosive shell from its tiny cardboard cannon. This does a huge amount of damage and has a wide blast radius.

Rescue box If one of your buddies goes down during combat, equip this box – complete with siren and light – and place it over their bodies. They'll be instantly revived and back in the action in seconds.

Assassin's straw box This was part of an *Assassin's Creed* April fools' video, but will apparently feature in the game. You can use it to jump safely from height, and you can also drag enemies into it for a quick KO.





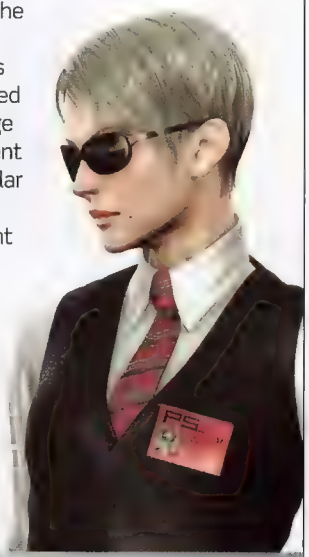
Ballooning up Your mercenary army has a rather aggressive recruitment policy.

the series, and a bold refinement of its tried and tested stealth gameplay.

Secret plans

In fact, a lot of the game is a mystery. The plot is being kept under wraps to avoid spoilers, and a Japanese journalist from Famitsu who recently finished the game said that there's a secret in it that will "shake the entire industry". We're also unsure of how building your own Metal Gear fits in. In a recent gameplay trailer released by Kojima Productions, there's footage of an editor being used to slot different pieces together, forming a mech similar to Metal Gear Rex from the original *MGS*. You can even customise its paint job. Strawberry pink, anyone?

Peace Walker is, if anything, the most ambitious *MGS* Kojima has ever made – and it's on *PSP*. Even if you aren't a fan of Sony's handheld, this will make you love it. The controls are artfully tailored, and it's a direct continuation of *Snake Eater*, rather than a spin-off like *Portable Ops* or *Metal Gear Acid*.



PSM3 Reckons

A full-fat, canonically correct *Metal Gear Solid*, rammed with content for both solo and co-op play. And it's on PSP!

YOUR WEAPON...

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L.A. Noire

Deduction, deceit and danger in Rockstar's detective drama

Martin Davies

Of the many things that *LA Noire* promises, perhaps the greatest is stepping out from the shadow of *GTA*. It's an open world game set in a city, yet it doesn't follow Rockstar's well-worn model of carnage interspersed by cut-scenes.

There'll be car chases and gunplay along the way – each case culminates in an action sequence – but LA Noire's brilliance lies in its policework. Crime scenes are investigated, evidence turned over in your hands, scrutinised for details. Witnesses are interrogated, their stories cross-checked, inconsistencies examined. Criminals are chased down and corruption exposed. But the real triumph is that all of this happens in a dynamic, open world – with you playing as rising cop star Cole Phelps.

Porkies

There's a car covered in blood. The man who owns it has been reported missing. What does finding his spare pair of glasses at the crime-scene tell you? What about the receipt in the trunk for a live pig? Or the picture frame in his bedroom, signed by a name that is clearly not his wife's? If you're a gumshoe of our calibre, the answer may be: not much. But match these details with testimonies from the missing person's wife and his dodgy co-worker, and a picture begins to emerge of a man eager to elope, perhaps even to fake his own death with the help of a pig-full of blood.

Underpinning the interrogations is Team Bondi's facial animation technology – aside from bringing emotional depth to the acting, it'll let you read a lie from a furrowed brow or distress from a trembling lip. Being able to work out if a person's telling a porky is critical but you also need to work out *why*.

No-ones halo is that shiny in the City of Angels, and everyone's got something to hide. Don your fedora, flip your notepad and shake out the facts.

Phelps is played by Aaron Staton of Mad Men.

It isn't all sleuthing. There are gunfights too.

CAN'T WAIT

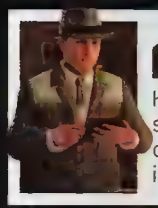
Like this? Play these...

GTAIV
PS3 **96%**
GTAIV still remains the defining open world action game

Heavy Rain
PS3 **88%**
The current benchmark in facial animation and drama

Condemned 2: Bloodshot
PS3 Review
Search for clues and beat up the homeless

Poker face The facial animation is truly astonishing, capturing every crease, tick and, most importantly, tell.



PSM3 Reckons
Hugely ambitious, *LA Noire*'s smart cop drama will live or die by the facial acting and intrigue of the plot-threads.

ETA
AUTUMN 2010

IS CHOICE...

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UFC 2010

As close as you'll get to MMA without taking a hit

Nathan Irvine

So we've finally got to grips with near-finished code of *UFC Undisputed 2010* – and while not a clean 'break' from last year's debut, the sequel embarks on an exhaustive, but vital, series of stretches and tweaks.

UFC 2009 was solid, but grappling was fiddly, and the career mode lacked depth. THQ's sequel looks similar, but new Sway and Posture controls make a fundamental difference to this intricate Mixed Martial Arts simulation. You can sway and counterpunch to devastating effect or even pin a guy to the cage and pound him with sharp knees. Heck, you can even fire out flash submission moves that will see you leap into a choke or arm/leg lock instantly to end a match.

Controls aside, the career, create-a-fighter and online modes have all been overhauled. Online leaderboards return but you can form clans (complete with user-created badges) and sign the world's best fighters to help your team rise through the ranks. Character customisation's deep – think *Smackdown* levels – including new hair styles and fight animations. Career mode's new, more believable story, even boasts press conferences and real voices.

With intuitive right analog grappling (not fiddly button presses), plus the ability to replay classic real-life fights like Matt Hughes vs. Royce Gracie from UFC 60, *UFC Undisputed 2010* pummels the original in every area.

PSM3 Reckons

This looks set to provide a far more complete experience than any other sports-based scrapper to date. Full review next issue.

ETA MAY 2010

Hunted: The Demon's Forge

Format PS3 | **Pub** Bethesda | **Dev** inXile | **ETA** 2010

Bethesda have confirmed drop-in, drop-out co-op for their latest dungeon crawler. If you don't have a real buddy to play with, you can continue your campaign with an AI partner. A bit like the *Lego* games, only with more gore and dwarves.

No More Heroes

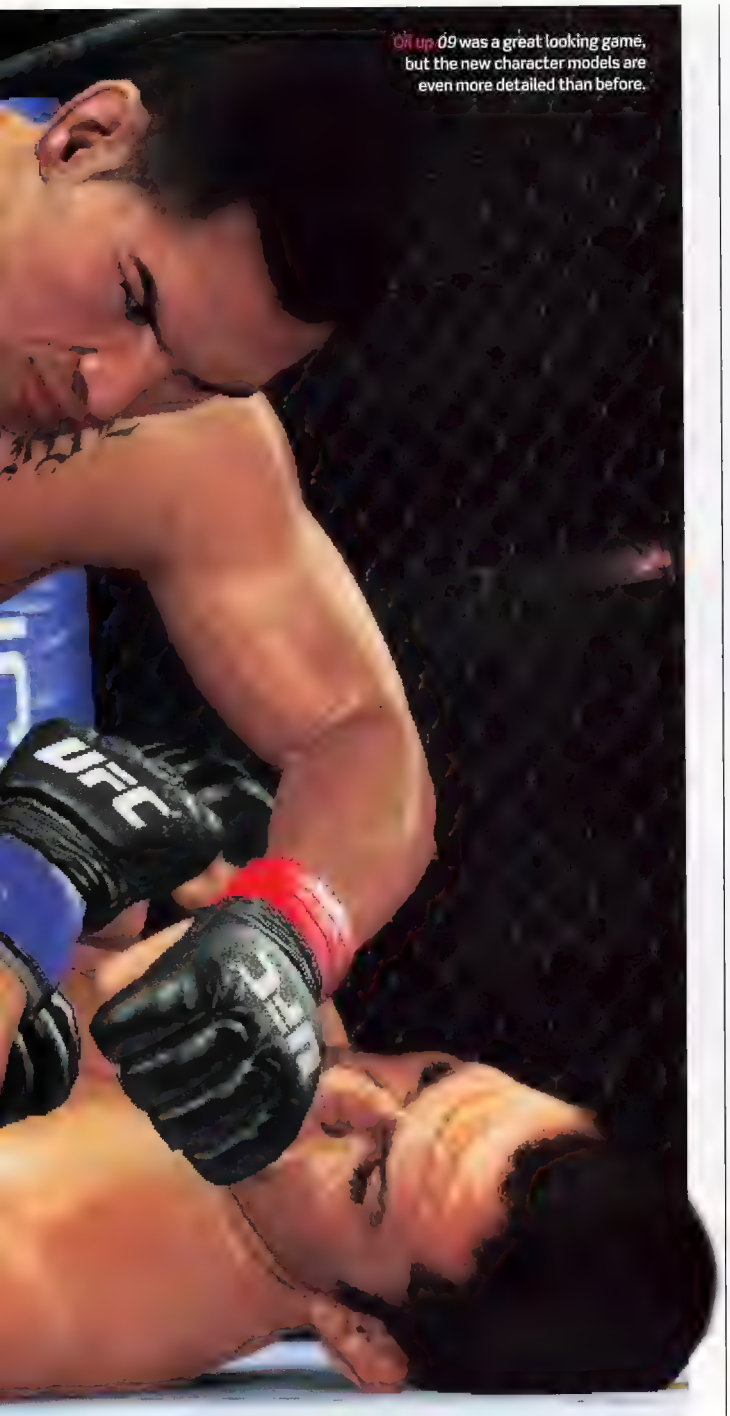
Format PS3 | **Pub** TBC | **Dev** Grasshopper | **ETA** 2010

A fiercely old-skool sandbox kill-'em-up, as hipster hitman Travis Touchdown fights to become the world's No.1 executioner. Dated visuals bely purist boss battles, irreverent humour, satisfying progression and a physical control system.

Clash of the Titans

Format PS3 | **Pub** Namco Bandai | **Dev** Game Rep. | **ETA** June

The film is a less-than-inspired piece of cinema, but its bold action sequences translate well to game format. We're particularly looking forward to the scorpion fight. The fact the game wasn't rushed to coincide with the movie is encouraging.



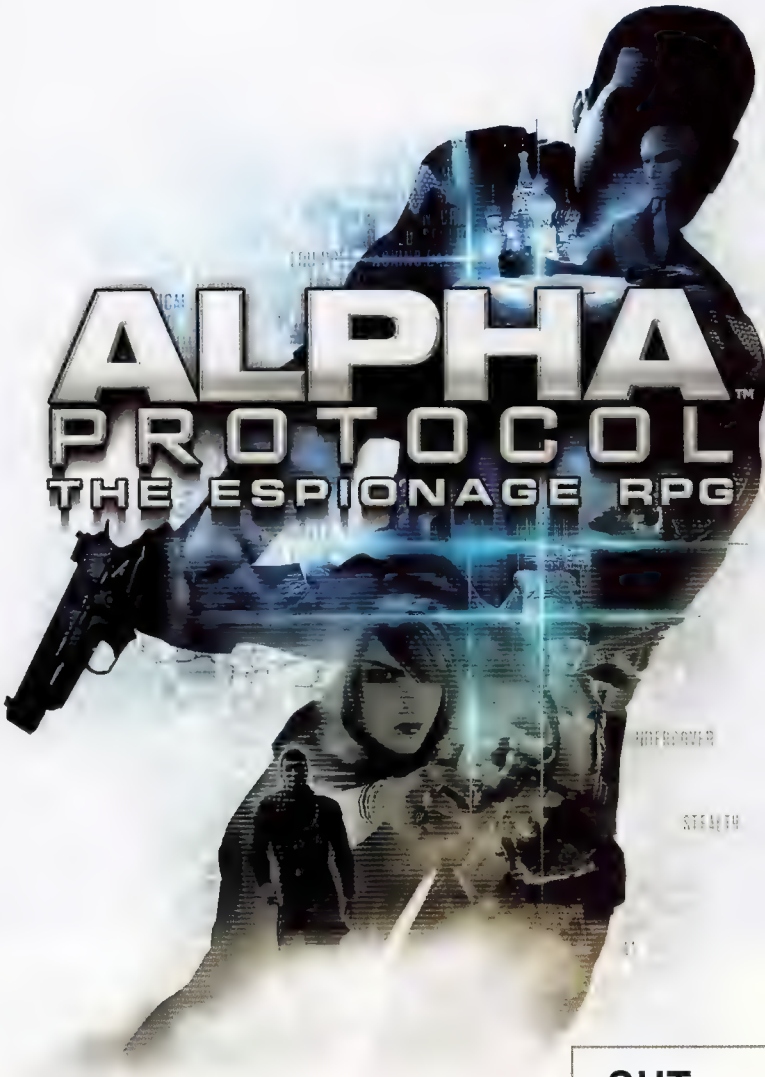
On up *09* was a great looking game, but the new character models are even more detailed than before.

Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions

Format PS3 | **Pub** Activision | **Dev** Beenox | **ETA** Autumn

Shattered Dimensions is four Spider-Man games in one, as you switch between eras to tackle a variety of challenges. Amazing Spider-Man and Spider-Man Noir are the styles confirmed so far. A neat premise, but early footage fails to add to the web of intrigue.

YOUR WEAPON IS CHOICE...



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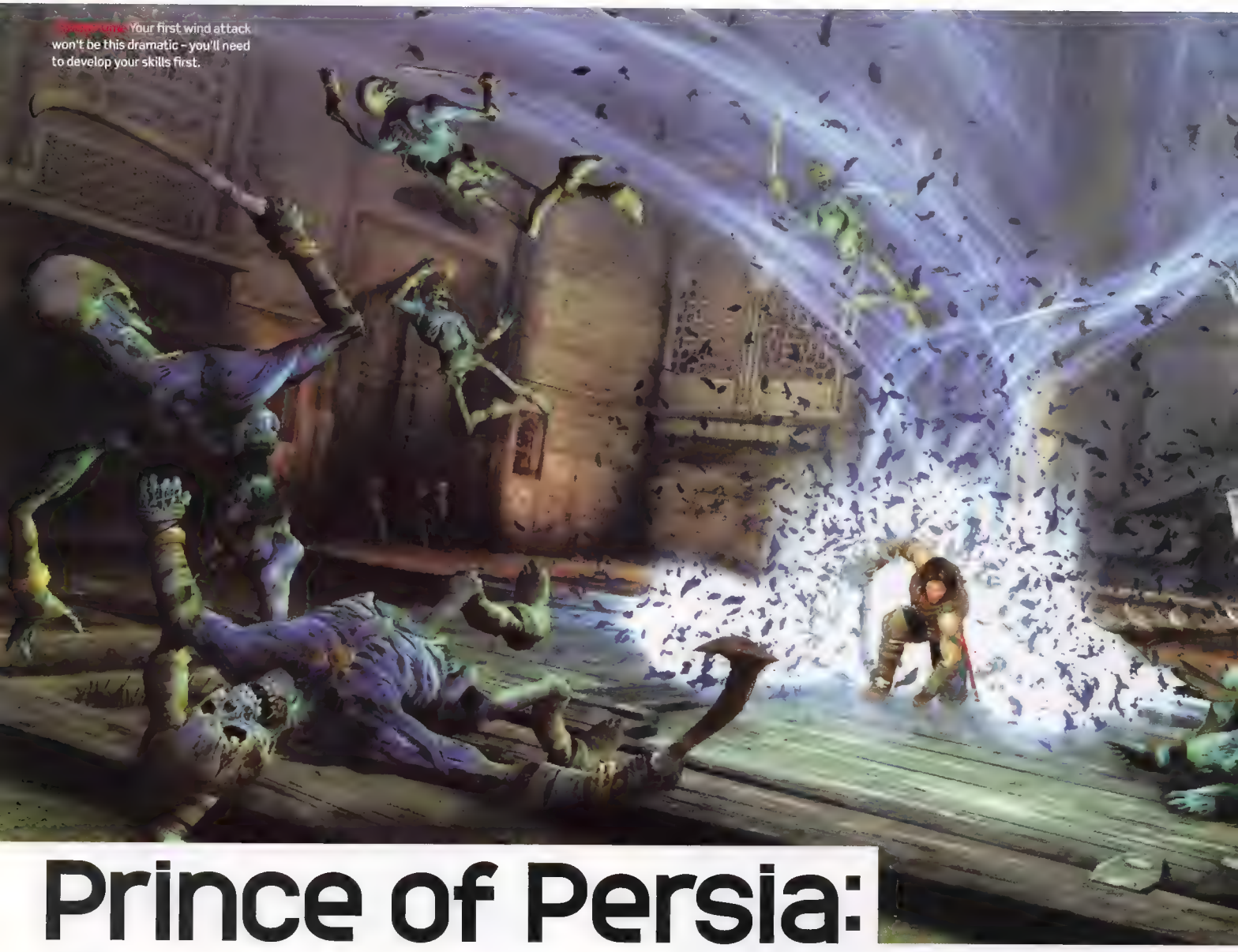
Format PS3
Pub Ubisoft | Dev Ubisoft
Players 1 | Genre Action adventure


Screenshot: Your first wind attack won't be this dramatic – you'll need to develop your skills first.

Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands

The prince's timeline has just been re-reset...

Jon Blyth

Ubisoft re-invented *Prince of Persia* from its 80's roots back in 2003 – then again in 2008. However, their latest chapter of the game could have the dubious honour of coining two new and grotesque words – midquel and Preboot. Midquel, because the events of the new game take place in the seven year gap between *Sands of Time* and *The Warrior Within*. Preboot, because this is right back to the moody Prince from the early noughties trilogy.

So, it's back to those emo leather straps, and the landscapes of dust and sand. It's even taking a strangely sensible approach to the simultaneous movie release – telling its own story, instead of trying to replicate scenes from the film. It works both ways. The movie wouldn't be much fun if it was a bloke throwing himself into walls for 90 or so minutes.

Familiar tale

The story is straight from the fantastical storybooks of the Arabian Nights – the Prince visits his brother Malik, only to find that his town is under siege. In desperation, Malik prepares to unleash a force powerful enough to turn the battle – a force that supposedly helped King Solomon in a similar hour of need. And you'd never guess what: it unleashes a merciless army of sand warriors, who make up for their sword-fodder combat status in their near infinite numbers (there's a lot of sand over there).

As well as his rediscovered time powers, the Prince has new elemental abilities. Soon after the whole Sand Army brouhaha, a beautiful female Djinn offers her magical tutelage. Some things survive reboots and deboots, and ball-candy for the boys is a dumb fact of life. She's the closest thing you'll get to constant companion Elika – the new old prince travels alone.

Most fundamental of these new elemental skills is the power to freeze water – so important, it's on a trigger button, just like wall walk. Freezing changes a level. Waterfalls transform

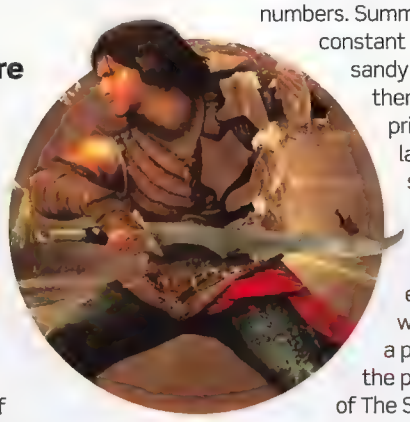
Ultra Ice Your water powers can be used to form acrobatic ledges, or pull deadly ice spikes from nowhere.

Old Habits New combat moves as... it's still the same old Pr...

into walls. Drainage pipes become climbable columns. And the impractical pipes set into the walls shoot out jets of water that become horizontal poles to swing from.

Force of nature

Freeze adds a new element of puzzle and timing, as you vault off a pole, unfreeze to go through the waterfall, and re-freeze to land on the next one. You can also use water to attack, throwing up a trail of ice-spikes from wet ground.



Other elements are Earth, which plays a role in combat, knocking enemies back, shielding you, and increasing your damage. Wind gives you a quick attack, which you'll level up from a knock-back gust to a devastating tornado. Then there's fire, which we were not shown. But you know what fire does, right?

Other than these elemental powers, combat is pretty simple. ▢ slashes your sword, and Ⓐ kicks back. Even larger enemies with shields can be quickly despatched with a kick and a stab – the challenge comes in the numbers. Summoners create a constant stream of new sandy bastards, making them an urgent priority – whereas larger enemies, such as the Charger, will prove more testing.

We played the eighth mission, which took us from a prison, packed with the powdered corpses of The Sand Army's victims, through the sewers, and into the palatial bath houses. It's a varied level, for sure, which uses the freezing mechanism to full effect. But so soon after *Assassin's Creed 2*, it takes some getting used to: you're not supposed to be able to climb everything, and are expected to take a more active role in timing. *AC* let you perform some long-distance parkour by just holding a couple of buttons – the Prince requires more adept timing to pull off similar feats.

Meanwhile, one extremely welcome addition is the ability to jump from a column in any direction, without having to shuffle around it, and point your back to the ledge you want to leap to. It's a small touch when you say it, but it's a huge jump towards keeping your movement fluid. And that's pretty much what *Prince of Persia* is all about. Keeping the moves going feels great.

The Forgotten Sands proves that *Prince of Persia* can survive more regenerations than Dr Who. Based on our time with the near-final version, its obvious that this game captures the spirit that made the 2003 reboot such a joy. Review next month.

EVOLUTION

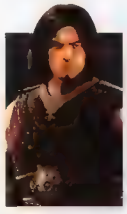
POP Series

POP: Sands of Time
PS2 **2003**
The original 3D reboot that introduced the rewind skill – a classic.

POP: Warrior Within
PS2 **2005**
Bigger and better in theory, but the Prince was devoid of charisma.

POP: Two Thrones
PS2 [illegible]
Back to form with a knowing compromise of the light and dark Princes.

Prince of Persia
PS3 [illegible]
A cel-shaded anomaly that was quickly forgotten but good fun.



PSM3 Reckons
If you re-embrace the old-school basics, *The Forgotten Sands* will prove to be a hugely satisfying experience.

ETA MAY 2010

Best of the rest...

More games, more screens, more hands-on insight

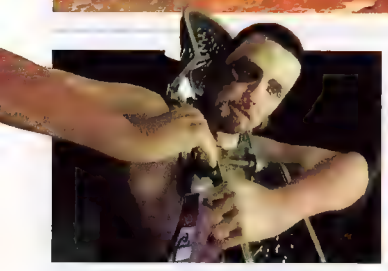
PS3 Castlevania: Lords of Shadow

Pub Konami | **Dev** Mercury Steam

Lowdown Ideologically, it's *God of War 3* meets *Prince of Persia*, with multiple boss strategies, platform exploration and puzzles; plus an epic score. Hero Gabriel's combat cross can be levelled up with light or dark powers, like Dante's scythe in *Dante's Inferno*. Combat aims to be deep yet accessible, and Kojima's penchant for intricacy bodes well for the epic plot.

ETA Autumn

Hot Cross Stung | Her combat cross can be used to fight enemies, swing across gaps and [illegible]



PS3 SAW 2

Details **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Zombie Studios

Lowdown The first *SAW* was gory, but not critically horrific – a good blend of action and puzzles. In the sequel, you play as Michael Tapp, son of the prequel's hero. Investigating his father's death, he stumbles into Jigsaw's cruel world. Details are scarce. Gore, less so.

ETA Autumn

PS3 International Cricket 2010

Details **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Trickstar

To put it as crudely as an Ozzie bowler, it's the *FIFA* of cricket games, with all the licenses from the UK and Australian leagues, all the top grounds (including Lords and the Oval), proper equipment and online modes. 360° analogue batting, anyone?

ETA Summer

PS3 Def Jam Rapstar

Details **Pub** Konami | **Dev** 4mm

Not enough rap on *Singstar* for you? Keep an eye on *Def Jam Rapstar*. No relation to the blinged-up beat 'em up, *Rapstar* lets you mumble along to 40+ tracks, karaoke-style, or freestyle over the lyrics. Artists include 2Pac, 50 Cent, Dr Dre and Wu Tang Clan.

ETA Autumn

PS3 Green Day: Rock Band

Details **Pub** EA | **Dev** Harmonix

Finally, a track list for *Green Day: Rock Band*. Check it out: tinyurl.com/yckduoe. It features tracks from Dookie, American Idiot and 21st Century Breakdown. EA has also revealed there will be day one DLC from the 21st Century Breakdown album.

ETA June

PS3 Madden NFL 11

Details **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA

This year's *Madden* spins out its biggest tweaks to pass receivers. Runners will catch more realistically, be rendered with better animations, and have an awareness of where first-down lines are, making their runs and field position more authentic too.

ETA August

PS3 Transformers: War for Cybertron

Details **Pub** Activision | **Dev** High Moon

Due next month, *T:WFC* lets you customise a Transformer before taking it online for class-based multi-player. And by customise, we mean 'pick different colour skins'. Looks OK, but hands-on may 'change' our opinion.

ETA June

PS3 Alpha Protocol

Details **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Obsidian

Expect a review of this spy RPG next issue. The latest dev diary details some of the gadgets, including a noise-emitter that can be used to lure enemies into traps. Promising, if ugly, RPG.

ETA May 28

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THE QUIREBOYS

HAMMER STAGE

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BLACK SPIDERS • NEW DEVICE

DOWN

ANTHRAX

CLUTCH

HIGH ON FIRE

AUDREY HORNE

LETHARGY

PROG STAGE

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Pass the buck Every player is controlled by a single human.
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Publisher: CyberSports Limited Developer: Monumental Games
Link: www.footballsuperstars.com Release: Out Now

Football Superstars

The free-to-play sports game that delivers competition and teamwork in a brand new way

First strike Experience the fame and glory of football.

Gummy "Gums" Bear takes to the field for his first match, a newcomer to football with everything to prove. He has no skills yet, but his natty faux-hawk already makes him look the part. The opposing team kicks off and Gums darts in, stealing the ball and rushing down the left flank. With opposing players hot on his heels, he crosses the ball into the centre, where it's swiftly headed into the net by a team mate. The goalscorer gets the glory, but Gummy's efforts throughout the rest of the game earn him Man of the Match.

After only a single game *Football Superstars* reveals the reason it's so compelling: it nails the competition *and* the teamwork of football.

Where most football games put you in control of an entire team, *Football Superstars* works differently. A free-to-play massively multi-player game, you directly control a single footballer that you've created. That means every other player on the pitch, goalkeeper excluded, is also controlled by another human. This has two results. The first is that every successful pass feels satisfying because you're not just fighting the other team, but working co-operatively. The second is that you're competing against not only your direct opponents, but your own team's players. You're earning the money and experience that unlocks new skills and equipment, and the fame points that let you live the lifestyle of a footballer.

Theatre of dreams

After creating your character, you enter the game in a coastal city designed like a footballer's mecca. It provides everything you need to become a legend.

There are training facilities, where computer-controlled coaches teach you the game's basics. Here you'll learn how to control your player via the third-person perspective and first-person style controls to shoot, tackle and pass. It's intuitive enough that you can pick it up right away, but an RPG skill system provides considerable depth with passive buffs and activated time-limited boosts. The first of these you'll gain will give you basic dribbling abilities, letting you feint in one direction while quickly speeding around players in the other.

The city contains gyms where you can trade your money and XP to level up Agility, Speed, Spatial Awareness, Strength and Stamina. Gums didn't need any skills or levelling to immediately play in a Five-a-Side friendly, but both are essential to compete in 11-a-side matches.

Player-Controlled teams place you as the manager of real human beings

But *Football Superstars* aims to provide not just the on-the-pitch experience of being a footballer, but the lifestyle and celebrity as well. To do this you need to earn Fame Points by buying fancy clothes (or penguin mascot suits) in the city's many clothes shops, drink at trendy restaurants, and trade experience for interviews with newspaper, radio and television journalists. The Fame Points then dictate how much money you're awarded for each match, letting you go from poor local newcomer to wealthy household name and beyond.

While the game is free-to-play, experienced players who want to explore the experience further can pay £5.99 a month for a Premium account that lets them create their own Player-Controlled Teams. The equivalent of a *World of Warcraft* guild, these teams place you as the manager of a football team that's entirely made up of other human players. You design the logo and strip. You choose the squad. You promote players to coach, play a captain's role, or scout. You get to take on the world.

Football Superstars is available to download and play now from www.footballsuperstars.com.

FROM THE MAKERS OF

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Find out more at firstplay.co.uk

Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

FirstPlay is a brand new interactive show, coming soon from the makers of Official PlayStation Magazine. Available from the PlayStation®Store and downloaded direct to your PS3 hard drive, each episode of FirstPlay costs 99p (or £8.99 for a 90-day subscription) and features exciting new content for your console – including video reviews and previews, plus interactive screenshot galleries and exclusive downloadable content.

For daily updates follow us at **twitter.com/FirstPlay_UK**

PlayStation Network

SEE THE FUTURE OF PS3. FIRST.

firstplay™

HIGHLIGHTS
Free Flash games for PS3
3D TV tech explained
5.1 surround systems rated

HOW TO...

Play 12 free games with PS3's built-in browser

Flash games are known for being deceptively simple though mind-numbingly addictive. We list the top 12 PS3-friendly games that you need to play...

PSM3 PROJECT 03

WHAT YOU NEED
- A PlayStation 3
- A PSN Account
- A working internet connection

TIME TAKEN
05 - 10 MINUTES

Whether you're after strategy that'll strengthen (or break) real-life relationships, or feeling too tired/busy/drunk to handle anything taxing, there's a free online game on these pages to suit you.

PS3's web browser makes it easy. We've trawled the net for the best games that work perfectly with a DualShock and look decent on a big TV.

First, log into your PSN account, scroll to the Network section and open the browser with ⊗. The press START to open an address bar before entering the url. Click R3 on the window to zoom in and, if necessary, fine-tune the view with the right analogue stick. Test the game and, if you like it, hit SELECT to bookmark. You can even set one of them to your homepage by pressing △ and scrolling to tools, then homepage.

During play, ⊗ works as a left click and the d-pad replaces your keyboard's cursor keys. That's it – free and easy.

THE GAMES

Neptune's Pride

URL np.ironhelmet.com

NP plays like a space-themed version of Risk that moves at a glacial pace (matches last weeks, not hours). Even though you're only required to log in every day or two, the remainder of your time will be spent scheming with mates before eventually betraying them. It's easy to plan your moves with a DualShock, though typing out message can be a bit time consuming without a keyboard. A must play for strategy fans with plenty of time on their hands.

Where can I get more of these free games? Try Albinoblacksheep.com, newgrounds.com or kongregate.com. Remember though – not all the games are optimised for PS3's browser.

QUICK TECH TIPS If you accidentally lock yourself out of internet access you can restore the default

POINT AND CLICK

Samorost

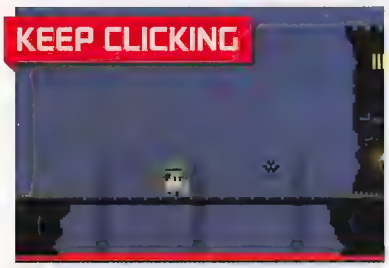
URL bit.ly/clrYjdws
Samorost is a surreal, inventive and stylish adventure from the makers of critically acclaimed PC hit, *Machinarium*. A must-play for fans of point and clickers.

PIXEL-PERFECT

N

URL 1080P: bit.ly/c6JrLH | 720P: bit.ly/9hYsDd
This superb platformer is optimised for different resolutions and plays like a dream. Lots of people paid for this on Xbox 360 when it got officially released.

KEEP CLICKING



One Button Bob

URL bit.ly/aY9fAR
You'll only push ⊗ for the whole adventure, but this a cute and inventive platformer.

STORY-DRIVEN

Warbears

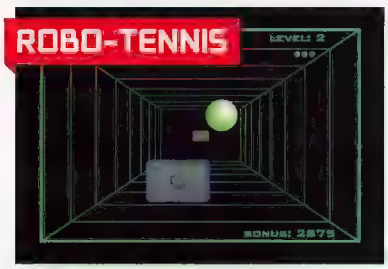
URL bit.ly/7zKbyv
A cutsey/violent point and click with plenty of missions variety and a great art style.

GET ADDICTED

Ball revamped II

URL bit.ly/blDDio
As simple as it gets but incredibly satisfying. Shame about the terrible name.

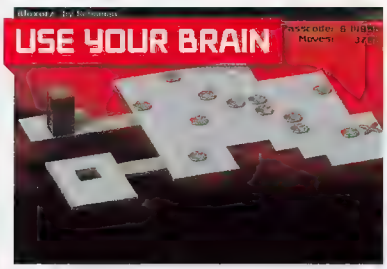
ROBO-TENNIS



Curveball

URL bit.ly/11MOl
Incredibly moreish, this is what Jayden should've been playing in *Heavy Rain*.

USE YOUR BRAIN



Bloxorz

URL bit.ly/2lqeWx
A great-looking, original puzzler. Plays better than a lot of PSP's Minis.

SOLVE A MYSTERY

Crimson Room

URL bit.ly/3wHpQwroom
A creepy point and click from years ago. We won't spoil – just play it.

CALCULATE

Bowman2

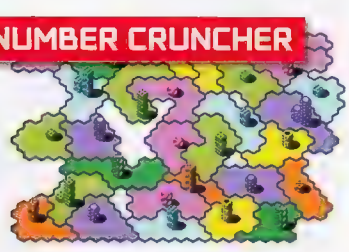
URL bit.ly/mJJpU
Great physics-based action. Tip: line up your shots from *in front* of the bowman.

SCORE ATTACK

Copter

URL bit.ly/lrrk1
Copter has only one mechanic, but it feels great to play. See you in a few hours.

NUMBER CRUNCHER



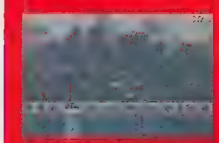
Dice Wars

URL bit.ly/1UHMfp
No hidden stats here; *Dice Wars* is simple strategy at its very best.

BROWSER FAQS

I get occasional slow-down, or memory messages. Help!?
You might need to clear your cache – bring up the menu by pressing △, then scroll to Tools and press ⊗. We also recommend that you only have one window open at a time. Check this by pressing L3.

I've found Flash games that don't work on PS3
PS3's latest firmware supports Flash 9, but 10 just got released for PC/Mac browsers. Eventually PS3 will catch up, but until then you'll need to use your desktop/laptop.



Can I use my USB keyboard instead?
Yes. And if youve got one you should play *Canabalt* (bit.ly/qz8HTl) – we omitted it because you need to press keys to get it started. A full keyboard will also come in handy for making and breaking *Neptune's Pride* alliances.

settings by visiting System > System Settings and clicking on Restore Default Settings. It'll reset

TOP 3 PADS

DualShock 3
Price £35
Good for Everything. It's pricey, but shames many cheaper third-party pads.

SFIV Fightpad
Price £25
Good for Fighting games. Features a custom d-pad and six button layout.

MW2 Combat pad
Price £36
Good for Shooters. Features sharper triggers and more resistant sticks.

TOP 3 HEADSETS

01 Sony Official Wireless Headset
Price £20
Superb sound quality with on-screen notifications.

04 Mad Catz COD: MW2 Bluetooth Headset
Price £20
Compact, but the quality suffers. Tricky to set up.

03 Gioteck EX-02 Next Gen Headset
Price £20
Good sound quality but a little bit cumbersome.

TOP 3 EXTRAS

01 EyeToy
Price £25
Good for video chat and makes a handy room mic.

04 Play TV
Price £60
Watch and record freeview TV on your PS3.

03 Sony Blu-Ray Disc Remote Control
Price £15
Makes PS3's Blu-ray controls much simpler.

All prices are based on competitive internet averages.

TECH-BUSTER

How are Sony creating PS3's 3D experience

Learn about the tech that shapes the way you play games. This month we look at the advantages of Stereoscopic 3D and explain how it works...

> "3D TV will make an even bigger impact than HD TVs"

According to Andrew Oliver, CTO of Blitz Games, Sony's decision to use Stereoscopic 3D is the only viable option: "We've been promoting digital stereoscopic 3D for some time now. It's great to see Sony fighting the same battle.

"It's frustrating that there have been recent games promoted as 3D that weren't anywhere near the quality found in cinemas, or that didn't use the latest digital tech. These solutions are better than the oldest types of glasses and they do work on all TVs, but they damage people's perceptions of the experience that digital 3D can provide. People got very excited about HD TV and thought it was the next big thing, but I think 3D TV will make an even bigger impact."

Senior programmer at SCEE's stereoscopic team, Ian Bickerstaff, explained the three-step process to making a 3D game: "It works by using two 1280 x 720 buffers and arranging them in a top/bottom arrangement, with a 30-pixel gap between them for video timing purposes. It's the left eye image at the top and the right at the bottom.

"The images are automatically converted to HDMI 3D output at 59.94 Hz but you can use any framerate you want as long as you synchronise the vertical refresh. That's really important because frame-tearing looks really bad in 3D; the tear will be in one image and not the other, so it's much worse than normal frame tearing.

"Step two is to define the depth of the image. To do this we move the left image to the left and the right image to the right. The shift must happen for all elements.

"The final step is fairly straightforward. We have a image that is flat but has depth into the screen. We move the cameras apart, and create the final 3D image."

Andrew Oliver
is Chief Technical Officer at Blitz games, creators of the first Stereoscopic 3D game on PS3.

Start saving You'll need a cutting-edge TV for Stereoscopic 3D.

everything, including the four digit password. It's easy to capture images or audio files from the internet.

GROUP TEST

5.1-channel surround sound speaker systems

Cheap desktop stereo speakers won't shake your world. Here are some options with more oomph

About subwoofers
A subwoofer carries low-frequency sound, and can be positioned anywhere in a room because low frequencies are not directional.

01 Klipsch HD Theater 500

Price £499.99
Designed mainly to complement flat-screen TVs in medium-sized rooms, this system features Klipsch's unique horn-loaded technology, which delivers more output using less amplifier power. The 100W sub features an 8-inch driver for 'room-shaking' bass.
Easy to set up? Yes, and centre speaker is magnetically shielded so it can sit on a TV.
Rating ★★★★★

02 Logic3 SoundStage 5.1

Price £199.99
This combines the speakers of a 5.1 system into one box. A 150W system with 13 drivers and two sub-woofers, the SoundStage features a remote control, SRS 3D pseudo-surround technology and an FM Radio.
Easy to set up? Yes – all the cables come in the package.
Rating ★★★½

03 Teufel Concept E 400

Price £294
Teufel's direct sales model saves you money so you can get this 5.1 premium class multimedia speaker system at a decent price. The 500W bass reflex subwoofer has plenty of low-end power, while the five satellites are compact yet punchy. This system is recommended for rooms up to 30 m².
Easy to set up? Yes, but remember that you have to order cables separately from Teufel's accessory shop.
Rating ★★★★½

04 Q Acoustics Model 2000

Price £485
An award-winning surround setup for a decent price, this consists of 2010 bookshelf speakers, a 2000C centre speaker and a 2070S subwoofer. The digitally driven subwoofer gives some real punch.
Easy to set up? Recommended for the more knowledgeable user.
Rating ★★★★½

Just press ⊗ on the link – your PS3 will automatically place images in the pictures folder and audio files in

MY NEXT... TV

The best HDTVs to suit any budget

SAVING IT £200-£399

Best Flatscreen for Sat

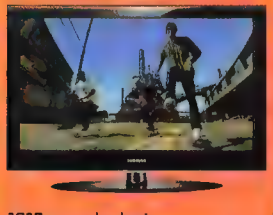
Panasonic TX-L19X10

Price £224-£300 | **Size** 19" LCD
Contrast Ratio 4000:1
Resolution 1366 x 768
Inputs S-Video, RGB Scart, HDMI, PC In | **Freeview** Yes | **Extras** A Viera TFT with SD card support. Great for PS3 games and eco mode adjusts to room ambience.
Or try... Toshiba [illegible]

Living room bargain

JVC LT-32DA99J

Price £336-£400 | **Size** 32" LCD
Contrast Ratio 4000:1
Resolution 1366 x 768
Inputs S-Video, 2xHDMI, 2xRGB Scart | **Freeview** Yes | **Extras** Not 1080p, but inbuilt 250GB hard drive to record Freeview. Solid [illegible]
Or try... Toshiba 32RV635 (1080p)



1080p on a budget

Samsung LE32A556

[illegible]

SPENDING IT £400-£999

All-rounder

Samsung LE37B550

Price £470-750 LCD | **Size** 37"
Contrast Ratio Dynamic
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Inputs 2xRGB Scart, USB, 4xHDMI, Digital Audio Out, Composite, Component | **Freeview** Yes
Extras Great blacks, super performance, sound a bit [illegible]. Superb value.
Or try... Sony KDL-32V5500 (47in) or 32D3000 £420

Best Plasma

Panasonic TX-P42G10

Price £700-£1000 Plasma | **Size** 42" | **Contrast Ratio** 2,000,000:1
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Inputs S-Video, 3xHDMI, Digital Audio Out, PC In, Component
Freeview Yes | **Extras** Freesat hi-2-ready TV. Infinite contrast
Or try... Panasonic TX-P42X1 (SP [illegible] but not 1080p)

Best 40"+

LG [illegible]

[illegible]

DREAMING IT £1000+

UK's first 3D TV

Samsung UE40C7000

Price £1700 LED | **Size** 40"
Contrast Ratio 2,000,000:1
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Inputs RGB Scart (mini jack), 4xHDMI, Digital Audio Optical, Component, Composite In, USB 2.0, PC In | **Freeview** Yes | **Extras** Samsung's LED 8 Series are UK's first 3D TVs but so new we're yet to test one. LED means deep blacks, 200Mhz Motion Plus, Internet@TV – everything you'd need.

Size Matters

Panasonic TH-65VX100

Price £7500 Plasma | **Size** 65"
Contrast Ratio 80,000:1
Resolution 1920 x 1080
Inputs 4xHDMI, Digital Audio Optical, Component, PC In
Freeview No | **Extras** Obscene price, but 65" of high quality
Or try... LG [illegible] (1080p, £3000)

Ultimate Performance

Pioneer PDP-[illegible]

[illegible]

My Media Month

What's been occupying the team's PS3s this month...

ANDY HARTUP ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Games-wise, this month has been all **Battlefield Bad Company 2**. It's swallowed 50 hours of my life, and pushed everything else aside. Even **God of War 3** couldn't compete. Thankfully, it hasn't encroached on my viewing. Took a trip to the cinema to see **The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo**, a Swedish language film of the bestselling book. It was incredible. A powerful, violent story well shot and acted. Not quite as good was **Clash Of The Titans**, which I saw the week after. The 3D does it no favours. Elsewhere. I've been catching up on episodes of The **Inbetweeners** and listening to plenty of **Moderat** on my iPod. It just seems right when the sun comes out...

DAN DAWKINS EDITOR

God of War 3 is as hard to fault, as it is to love – for all the technical accomplishment, I was never as shocked by the visuals as, say, *Uncharted 2's* snow effects; or as emotionally enagaged by Kratos' plight as I was by Ethan's quest to save his son in *Heavy Rain*. Even knowing his back story, Kratos is a dick, and the attempt to reclaim his humanity via Pandora felt muddled and flat. Still. little feels as good as punching grunts into luminescent dots with the Cestus gauntlets. A more believable, if *less* politically correct hero than Kratos is Don Draper; the womanising, boozing, smoking hero of **Mad Men**, which I'm belatedly catching up with on Blu-ray.

ANDY KELLY FEATURES EDITOR

I've been playing the original **Metal Gear** this month on PSP, in preparation for *Peace Walker*. But my free time has mostly been dominated by **Rescue Me**, a US drama about firefighters in New York City starring controversial comedian Denis Leary. It's funny, touching, challenging telly. I've also been rewatching **Twin Peaks**, as it's the surreal soap opera's 20th anniversary this year. It's the greatest TV show ever made. I've also been devouring a lot of new music. The new **Gorillaz** album, Plastic Beach, is brilliantly inventive, and Traveller's In Time and Space by The **Apples in Stereo** is the most infectious album I've heard in a long time.

the Music folder Don't worry if your PS3 isn't showing up all the files on a memory stick. Just press △ and

BLU-RAY MOVIES

Dynamic duo There's some real on-screen chemistry generated by Law and [illegible]

"Even without the 3D tech, Avatar is still a decent watch"

No extras, no 3D – but James Cameron's **Avatar** still manages to capture the imagination

FILM & DISC DETAILS

Release Out now
RRP £30
Run time 162 mins
Cert 12
Director James Cameron
Stars Sam Worthington, Giovanni Ribisi, Sigourney Weaver, Zoe Saldana, Michelle Rodriguez, Laz Alonso, Joel Moore
Discs 2
Extras None
Audio 5.1
Aspect Ratio 1.78:1

First off, we have to tell you this first release of James Cameron's epic Avatar isn't in 3D. If you're an audio-visual aristocrat who has already snapped up a 100hz TV, sorry, you'll have to wait until the end of the year for the 3D-enabled version.

What you get on this Blu-ray is the film, with everything optimised for HD viewing. Or at least, that's the excuse Fox have given for the fact this package comes with no extras.

Even without the 3D tech, Avatar is still a decent watch – especially in 1080P. Pandora looks stunning, especially the night-time jungle scenes, and the battle sequences really roar if you're using a decent surround set-up.

Sadly, even the stunning visuals can't quite mask the whiff of cheese that seeps out of the plot, and without the spectacle of 3D the middle-section seems to drag on even more than it did when we watched it on the big screen.

Disc Extras No extras here. Expect a 3D enabled, multi-disc edition in November, which will feature all the behind-the-scenes stuff that the dedicated crave.

Movie ★★★★☆ **Disc** ★★★★★

True Blood Season 2

Release 17 May | **RRP** £50 | **Run time** 12 hours (approx.) | **Cert** 18 | **Director** John Dahl, Michael Lehmann & Alan Ball | **Stars** Anna Paquin, Stephen Moyer, Sam Trammell, Ryan Kwanten, Rutina Wesley, Jim Parrack

You can, and should, already get the first season of this adult vampire drama based on the novels by Charlene Harris. Rammed full of sex, violence and drug abuse, it's a welcome antidote to Twilight fever. Without wanting to give too much away, this second series continues to follow the relationship between Bill and Sookie, and although the shocks are less intense, the plot-strands are just as gripping. New to it all? Pick up the season 1 and 2 box, which is also out on the 17th.

Disc Extras Enhanced viewing provides picture in picture extras and Flashback/Flash Forward lets you rewatch pivotal scenes to help you catch up.

Movie ★★★★☆ **Disc** ★★★★☆

The Road

Release 17 May | **RRP** £20 | **Run time** 112 mins **Cert** 15 | **Director** John Hillcoat | **Stars** Charlize Theron, Viggo Mortensen, Guy Pearce, Robert Duvall, Garret Dillahunt, Michael K. Williams

Seen No Country For Old Men? This is based on a book by the same author, and it retains similar themes of hope, isolation and unflinching violence. Set in a post-apocalyptic landscape, it sees a father and son struggling to survive against the harsh conditions and gangs of genuinely chilling cannibals. Not a date movie, but well worth a watch if you can handle the extreme bleakness of the American wasteland in 1080P.

Disc Extras Nothing too exciting here – there's a director commentary and feature by Hillcoat and several snippets of B-roll to pour over.

Movie ★★★★★ **Disc** ★★☆☆☆

BLU-RAY RELEASE PLANNER

A Scanner Darkly	10/05	Atonement	17/05	Precious	24/05
Battlestar Galactica: The Plan	10/05	It's Complicated	17/05	Road to Perdition	24/05
Capote/In Cold Blood	10/05	Minority Report Limited Edition	17/05	Up in the Air	24/05
Doctor Zhivago	10/05	Sherlock Holmes	17/05	Astro Boy	31/05
The Great Dictator	10/05	The Road	17/05	The Book of Eli	31/05
Nowhere Boy	10/05	True Blood Season 2	17/05	The Damned United	31/05
Where the Wild Things Are	10/05	44 Inch Chest	24/05	Daybreakers	31/05
				Michael Jackson's Moonwalker	03/06
				A Single Man	07/06
				Absolute Power	07/06
				Bad Boys	07/06
				Kelly's Heroes	07/06
				Ponyo	07/06
				Caddyshack	14/06
				Collateral (Special Edition)	14/06
				Edge of Darkness	14/06
				Total Recall	14/06
				War of The Worlds	14/06
				Boogie Nights	21/06
				Shrek 2	28/06

click on "Display All" – you'll be able to see everything, even data which isn't compatible with PS3.

© Dimension Films , HBO, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

7
www.pegi.info
THE GAME IS JUST THE START
Start imagining...well, anything! Create your character and your kart and start racing on thousands of tracks made by players around the world. In fact, why not create a gravity-defying, missile-flying racetrack of your own?
modnation.com
PlayStation

SONY
make.believe

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

True emotion Team Ico knows how to pull the heartstrings.

"Oh, your land's under duress by a magic crystal is it? Zzzzzz"

I ache for *The Last Guardian*. 'Why?' I hear you ask. Well, going on past Team Ico games, it will make me feel something. Most games are so inane and banal that at most I shrug my shoulders at the story, or the hero/anti-hero's plight. Oh, your land's under duress by a magic crystal is it? Zzzzzz. Someone's trying to assassinate the President you say? Zzzzzz.

I cried at *Shadow Of The Colossus*, though. Not buckets, but when Agro came limping up the stairs, loyal to the end... Well, let's just say I had a sniffle. Likewise, cutting your finger off to save your son in *Heavy Rain* – good lord, that's some harsh business and I felt anxious. Or the screen goes black, gunshot, and OMG Snake killed himself. I admit it, I shed a wee tear. (Damn you, Hideo, you should have ended the game there.)

So that's three games that I can quite clearly remember making me feel something amid the hundreds that are just pretty to look at and even nice to play, but after the credits roll, leave me with nothing more substantial than a save game file and some Trophies. So bring on *The Last Guardian*. Then I can cry when the boy or the cat/bird/rat dies at the end. Until it's out, I'm off to upgrade my weapons, get some headshots, hit that apex, collect the 100 items, learn that combo and so on.

Michael Haylett, Preston

Yes, as much as we love brainlessly shooting men/collecting boxes/driving fast, games with emotional punch resonate longer – like the 'little Bruce' scene from *Batman: AA*, or the microwave tunnel in *MGS4*; something the best TV shows and movies have known for years. Care to tell us your top 'something in my eye' moments?

Star letter wins you a prize!

Write the star letter and win a game of your choice. We'll contact the winner each montn and ask them what they'd like to receive.

PSM3 wants YOU!

- **Post** PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a prize
- **Email** mail us at psm3@futurenet.com
- **PlayStation Network** Add us: PSM3uk
- **Facebook** Search for 'PSM3' in the Groups application
- **MySpace** Visit www.myspace.com/psm3
- **PSM3mag.com** Visit the forum at psm3mag.com
- **Online** Play the team at online games and win big
- **Twitter** Follow us at twitter.com/psm3_magazine

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

I've never used a PSP or a PSP Go but I'm thinking of getting one. Should I get a 3000 or a PSP Go?

James Beattie, email

The Go is nice and compact, but uncomfortable for lengthy sessions. We recommend you pick up a PSP 3000 and find yourself some bargain UMDs. Is it ever too sunny to play games?

Julian Owens, Email

As long as you can keep direct sunlight off the screen you should be fine. The more you play *Heavy Rain*, the more flawed and boring it gets. Credit to David Cage, though, it was the smartest plot I have

All in the family Our PS3 slims have been performing just fine.

Slim pickings

I'm a slightly depressed PS3 gamer at the moment. I bought my console at launch and it recently packed in. After sending it back, I got a replacement PS3 slim. I tried it out, and I couldn't quite put my finger on why my games looked different. I tried *GTA IV* and the graphics looked bad – the pedestrians' faces were slightly blurred and in places looked grainy. In *MGS4*, there's a transparent outline around Snake in the end scene. It's also visible in *Heavy Rain* when Madison and Mars kiss in the hotel. Finally, I spent one weekend watching some Blu-rays and now it's buggered my TV. The slim isn't as good as the original console and I believe it needs more development time.

Justin John, email

We haven't heard reports about Slims showing up visual defects in comparison to fat PS3s. Chances are you've got a dodgy HDMI output on your slim. We recommend you send it to Sony under the warranty and have them look at it, or send a replacement.

PSNMail

Mail us at psm3uk

Wii love fish

There's a game on Wii where you get to swim around the ocean and search for fish. If PS3 had those kind of games instead, they'd look and play better.

SkyBomberSamuel

We've played *Endless Ocean* on Wii, and enjoyed it, but prefer *Africa* on PS3. It's just as chilled out and looks amazing.

Define 'guardian'

I came up with an idea called *Time Guardians*. It's about three people: a pyromage (there's a lack of magic set in the future except for *FF*), a cyborg who can turn his arms into nearly any weapon (his main being dual miniguns) and flies Iron Man-style, and a super-soldier who's like the prototype of the super-soldiers. They would fight in famous wars of the past, present and future, killing famous people from various time periods. It would be a PS3 exclusive too, 'cause the Xbox smells.

Samuel Kinns, Facebook

Time Guardians sounds, er, *inspired*. And, yes, Xbox's smell is why Kojima made *MGS4* a PS3 exclusive. Fact.

Cause for alarm?

I just read your review of *Just Cause 2*, a game that I have recently got into and enjoy, and I think you missed out one crucial criticism. It's worse than being unable to use cover, throw things or jump just a little bit higher: it's Bolo Santosi. First appearing in the demo, hers is the single worst voiceover I've ever heard or intend to hear in all my game-playing life. I understand that Panau is a fictional island, but that doesn't mean the voice casters can get someone who can't seem to do any accents at all and then force her to do one anyway. "Just please, *please*, don't sound American. Anything foreign-sounding will do!"

Different class Most games' voice acting sucks – a sad thing indeed.

ever heard of in any game or film.
Kyle Morris, Fbook
We think it got more exciting towards the end. Still a must-play though, eh?
How do you get into the magazine's Top Reader's Section?
Christopher Gill, Fbook
Just visit this link (bit.ly/d7iMZ5) and follow the simple instructions. Done.
Loving *God Of War 3* but I hate the flying up and falling down the chain shaft bits.
Garry Gillespie, Fbook
They do get tricky later on. Try inverting your flight controls in the options. That should make it a bit easier. Maybe.

The best of PSM3MAG.COM

This month's best forum thread

Topic: Why have people started to hate on *Modern Warfare 2*?

I see that people have nothing but bad things to say about *MW2*, why??
ID-BE-A-PIRATE

It didn't live up to the high expectations created by hype. The online seems to favour campers and noob tubers due to overpowered weapons and perks. The online has left a sour taste in peoples' mouths.
frankthepieking

The online is a broken, lifeless mess. I played with some friends for about five minutes, got bored and went back to *MAG*. The story was boring too. There was only one part where I thought, 'This is cool.' It was when you had to drive the car onto the plane. Not even the return of Price could crack a smile. The most over-hyped and worst game I played last year, and I played *Red Faction...*
Crackajack

Quote of the month

As uttered on the PSM3 forums

"He wears the baggiest T-shirts I've ever seen, yet they stick out like pointed melons."

by Multiplayerking

I didn't know WTF was going on, even after completing it. The story was told in a poor way. Bits of dialogue over loading screens with the odd inclusion of a mini cut-scene at the end of a mission a good story do not make. There needs to be something there that gets a player hooked. It's like they just plonked the storyboards from development into the game and turned them HD.
TheCrimsonFenix

You can't tell me that going to "Plan B" wasn't cool, or [neither was] rappelling down a cliff side to a soldier and stabbing him in the neck, and watching the life drain out of his HD eyes.
ID-BE-A-PIRATE

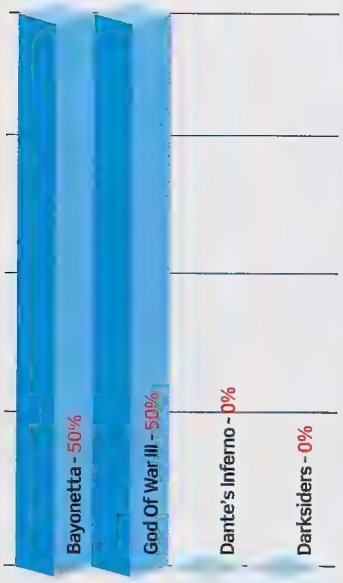
I think the expectations were just way too high. I went back to it the other day after not playing it for months and it's actually a great laugh. You just have to remember you are playing a game like *Quake* or *Unreal Tournament* rather than a proper war FPS. Once you've got past that, it's just great fun.
Reegeee

Visit psm3mag.com and have your say

Poll Position

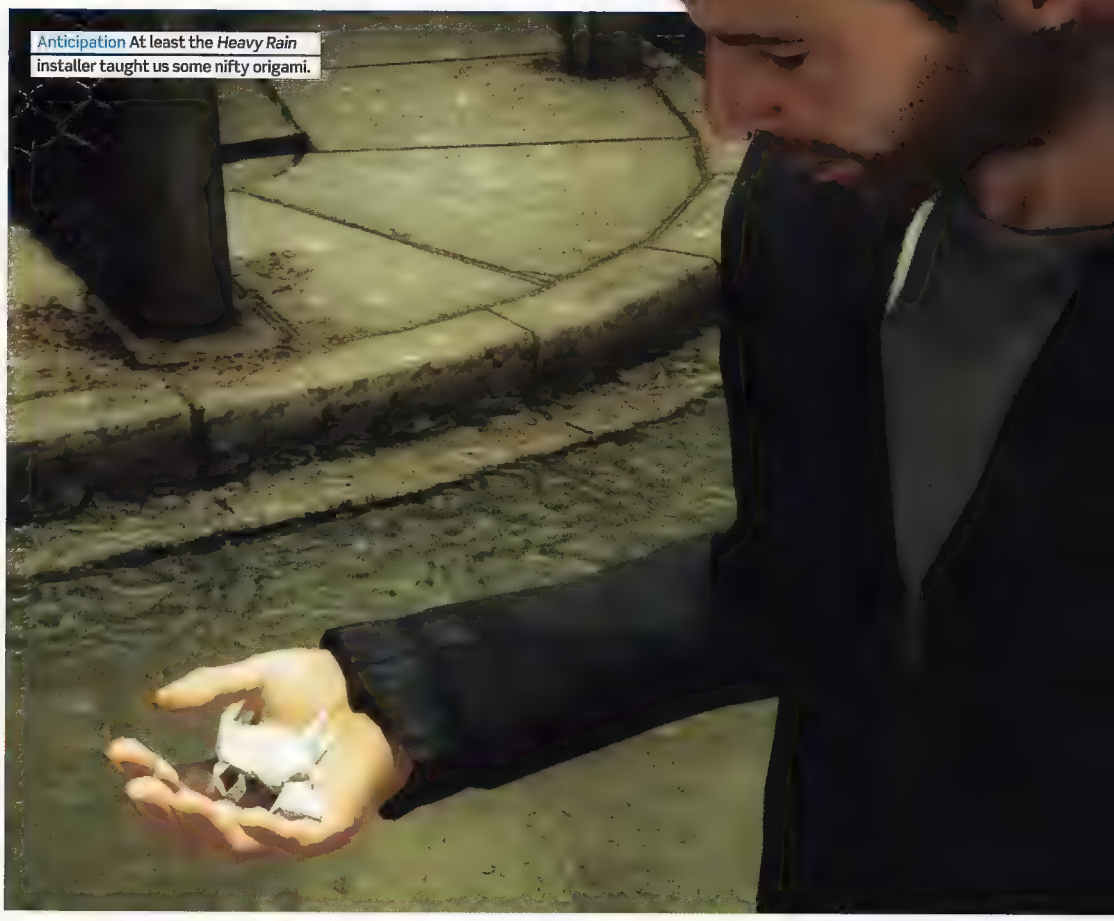
We ask. You answer

This month What's the best hack 'n' slasher of the year so far?



Next Month What's going to make best use of PS Move? Party games, Sports games, RPGs or action adventures?

To vote check out the 'Poll Position' thread in the 'PSM3 Magazine' forum on www.psm3mag.com



Anticipation At least the *Heavy Rain* installer taught us some nifty origami.

Sure, none of the voice acting is much cop, save for Rico's Hispanic accent (which still isn't brilliant), but that woman's voice is so unbearable that I'll probably only complete two-thirds of the game because of it. It's not just the bewildering mix of nationalities thrown in, but the stressing of any part of any given word that shouldn't be stressed just to make it sound more foreign. It's about as convincing as a *Gran Turismo* release date. (Incidentally, I'd rather read 'Possible UK Release Date?' for *Gran Turismo 5* and get one instead of a joke and a pretty minimal Q&A.) It's like nails on a chalkboard, to the extent that I, strongly and quite unrealistically, hoped her character would be completely re-voiced between the demo and the release. Oh well. I guess I could just mute her and read the subtitles. But I won't enjoy doing it!
Michael Gooderham, email

Yes, we feel your pain. She's the worst voice actor in PS3 history. In fact, Bolo Santosi – and her bizarre accent and appalling acting – have become something of an internet meme. So much so, the Singaporean newspaper, TS Life, tracked the actress, Liz Sutherland (a native of the country), down to comment. "The game is like a B-movie," she explained. "It's utterly outlandish, so a naturalistic voiceover wouldn't have worked. It's an over the top game which is pure fun and escapism." Excuses, excuses.

Call to arms

The war between the Xbox 360 and PS3 still goes on. I'm lucky enough to own both consoles and usually choose to play multi-format games on my 360 rather than PS3. Why? For reasons that must be common irks for PS3 users.

I recently rented out the rubbish *Wheelman* on the PS3 – it took 30 minutes to put the game data onto my console before I could even play it, then I had to update and wait for that to install... WTF! Put the same game in the 360 and you can play it instantly. If you don't update a game, a notice pops up while you're playing, which is really annoying. Especially when playing something like *FIFA*, since the game continues behind the black screen!

Likewise, if you download a demo from PSN, you have to install it afterwards. It takes an age to finish before you can play. The 360 takes less time to download and installs the game at the same time.

Then along come games like *Heavy Rain* and *God Of War 3* (which made my eyes bleed). They make me think, 'Why do I have these bad feelings? My PS3 rocks.' These games show why my shiny black machine sits next to it's brother – my Sony TV.
Kev White, email

PSNMail

Mail us at psm3uk

Gateway games

My girlfriend hates games. How can I get her addicted, or at least to a point where she doesn't mind watching me play?
Try *Heavy Rain*, but if all else fails 10 minutes of *Peggle* might do it.

Sights and sounds

GOW3 looked nice, but didn't play amazingly. Are better graphics all we have to look forward to? I'm not even bothered about *Crysis*.
Highfidfrederick82
Yes, *GOW* is mostly about the looks, but you're underestimating *Crysis*.

Haze you guys! According to reader Bjorn Bem, *Haze* is the best FPS he owns. Each to their own, eh.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

I just walked into my local shop and got asked to verify my age. First time this has happened.
Wes Smith, email

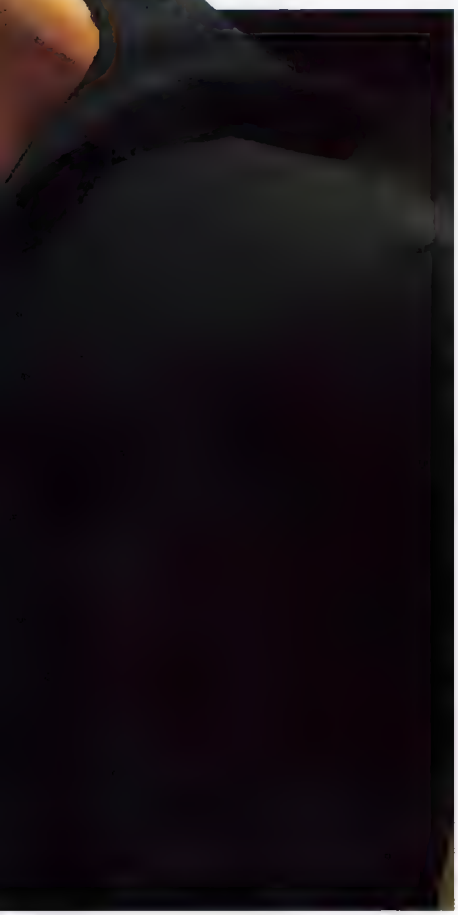
I'm 20 and getting ID'd for a magazine? Challenge 21 must be getting serious.
Wes Smith, email

You should be proud of your young, baby-esque features. C'mon, *inFamous* 71%. Really? I know this was a year ago, but PSM3, really?!
James Davie, Fbook

Have you even met Zeke? Jesus.

Timesplitter remake... I want one... etc.
About three people a day, email

We feel your pain. Free Radical are too busy at the moment working on *Crysis 2* multi-player.



since *Goldeneye* on the Nintendo 64, the only shooters I have shelled out my cash on have been *Modern Warfare 2* and *Haze* (which sits proudly on my shelf as my favourite FPS of all time).

Before you write me off as being completely mental, I'll point out that I don't have broadband or an endless supply of PS3-owning friends, so *Modern Warfare 2*'s short campaign just felt like a rip-off. At the opposite end of the scale, *Haze* had a nice long single player that kept me coming back for more until completion. So, while the story may have been far-fetched and the enemy AI was nothing to write home about, at least I wasn't paying £50 for online and multi-player modes I'll never use.

I hope games like *Vanquish* do well, because I'm sure other strictly offline gamers are sick and tired of shelling out money for tiny campaigns and useless online add-ons.

Björn Bem, Wolverhampton

Haze? Best of all time? Really? Ahem. Anyhow, you're not alone Bjorn – many of our readers feel the same about multi-player taking over single-player experiences. Why not carry on the debate at psm3mag.com?

Installers are frustrating, but cut down on loading times for future sessions, and mean that your console can run quietly and with less strain on the components. We actually prefer games with installs for this reason.

And as downloads go: Xbox 360 has quicker downloads (demos/patches etc) because you pay for that. £50 per year, to be exact. This allows Microsoft to run more, better host servers that get the content to you quicker. PSN is free, but downloads take a little longer.

Haze-y memory

I would like to respond to your debate about *Vanquish* not having a multi-player mode (issue 125) and say that I fully agree with Andy Kelly's views. I've been a gamer for over 22 years, but

Pay your way

I've been a bit annoyed by the way Sony Computer Entertainment have been responding to Microsoft securing exclusive DLC for major games.

Fallout 3, *Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Modern Warfare 2* are just a few of the games that Microsoft have landed exclusive DLC for. And what's Sony's response? Just a few exclusive Joker challenge rooms for *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. Regarding actual game exclusives, though. *Uncharted* and its sequel, the *Resistance* series and, of course, *Heavy Rain* are all great games.

Darren, Glasgow

Timed exclusives are just part of the industry Darren. As long as games still make money, MS and Sony will both compete to secure exclusive DLC, to secure – in return – your cash.

Tat object of the month

The 'best' of the game-related bilge delivered to the PSM3 office

Lost Planet 2 Bazooka

If only other members of the team had obvious weakspots – then we could floor them with a well-aimed hit from this lethal piece of kit. Well, not *quite* lethal. We're actually relieved that Capcom supplied foam balls for ammunition; it's literally impossible to injure anyone.

Where can I get one? You can't, sorry.

PSM3's Top Four Readers

Be heard. Join PSM3's online army today

FACEBOOK

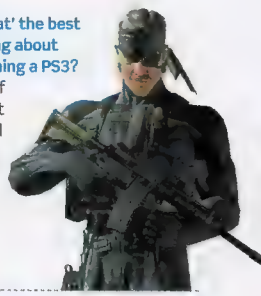
Who are you? Dan Nurse.
Where are you from? York.
What are you listening to at the moment? Green Day.
What's your favourite game of all time? *GTA III*.
What are your favourite films? X-Men, Bond, Inside Man, American Gangster.
How long have you been reading PSM3? A long time.

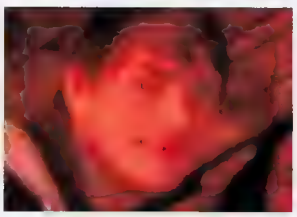
THE BIG Q **What's the best thing about owning a PS3?** It does everything, it really does. Plus online is free – I'm not gonna pay extra just so I can talk to my friends while playing *COD*.

MYSPACE

Who are you? Kyle Travis.
Where are you from? Nottingham.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Scouting For Girls, Plan B, Will-i-am, Black-Eyed Peas.
What's your favourite game of all time? Probably *Resident Evil 4*, maybe *MGS4*, possibly *GTA: Vice City*.
What are your favourite films? Rocky HV, Terminator HII, Gone In 60 Seconds, Commando, The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button.
How long have you been reading PSM3? Since early in the PSM2 days.

THE BIG Q **What' the best thing about owning a PS3?** The luxury of the well-built machine and some of the great exclusives it's starting to turn out.





FACEBOOK

Who are you? Dave Nicholls.
Where are you from? Far North Queensland, Australia.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Akon and Said & Done – a great local band.
What's your favourite game of all time? All time? It's *The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time*.
What are your favourite films? All-time best movies are: Dusk Till Dawn, Groundhog day, Terminator 2, Boondock Saints, Snatch and Seven Pounds.
How long have you been reading PSM3? Bit over a year I reckon. Living in a fairly remote town means a PS3 mag is sometimes hard to come by, but I always buy PSM3 if it's there.

THE BIG Q **What's the best thing about owning a PS3?** Simply put, the sleek design is a chick magnet. That's right, they're lining up to play with my shiny black thing.

MYSPACE

Who are you? Harry Cutler-Smith.
Where are you from? Bournemouth.
What bands are you listening to at the moment? Lady Gaga, Kings of Leon, Chiddy Bang.
What's your favourite game of all time? Its gotta be *Duke Nukem* for the N64 – an epic game. "It's time to kick ass and chew bubblegum, but I'm all outta gum." Love it!
What are your favourite films? All the Bonds and any comedies. Got to have a laugh.
How long have you been reading PSM3? A year and a half.

THE BIG Q **What's the best thing about owning a PS3?** Because one day it will take over the earth and enslave all Xbox users. :D

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PSM3

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Reviews

Instant[illegible]tice

80 Skate 3

HIGHLIGHTS

Team based tricking
Massive monsters
Nut munching pooches

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"This is the only kart racing game you'll ever need"

ModNation Racers
page 90

PSM3 BUY IT

'Buy It' Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

THE TEAM

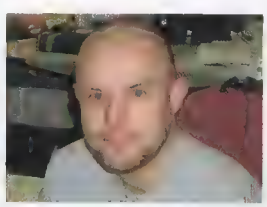
Heroic reviewers, risking their lives for truth

Dan Dawkins
Specialist in Sports, showing his true feelings for the *RIDE* board.
Playing *Skate 3*: "I'm skating to work today. See you in six hours!"

Andy Hartup
Specialist in FPS, looking serious on Japanese subway trains.
Playing *Sam & Max*: "It almost shifted my serious face. *Almost*."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, looking increasingly weary.
Playing *MGS Peace Walker*: "The second best Walker after Johnnie."

Owen Hill
Specialist in Fighting, getting beat up by Yoshinori Ono.
Playing *SSFIV*: "Not even *Ono* can-handle the *Final Fight* combo."



Shaun Curnow
Specialist in Driving, looking very serious from the safety of his desk.
Playing *ModNation Racers*: "I made a track in the shape of a thingy."

KNOW IT NOW

- Online and offline team challenges? ☑
- Intuitive, deep and fulfilling controls? ☑
- Park editor and advanced replays? ☑
- Coherent single-player structure? ☑

"You can tackle any solo objective with real-life friends – so call a pal in if you're stuck"

Skate 3

EA's online three-quel offers freedom at a price

Evolution? Or iteration? With only 16 months between this and *Skate 2*, EA's latest isn't as familiar as you'd fear; nor the revolution its myriad tweaks briefly threaten. What it *is*, is rarely crafted, tweaked in synchrony with fan feedback and, possibly, PS3's first fully-online single-player game – and a promising, if slightly worrying, portent for all games to come. Oh, and it's also a topical, political parable with a warning for David Cameron... but more of that later.

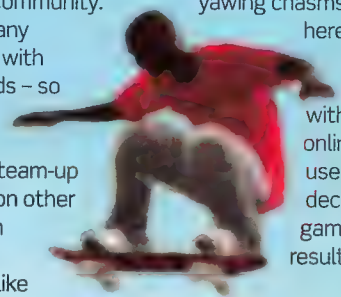
Political lobby

Sign in to EA Nation, and every game of *Skate 3* starts in an online lobby; updating your achievements, your 'brand' status (see Build Your Own Brand), how many friends are online and – sigh – how many people have crushed your scores. You can instantly skip the lobby into the solo game, but *Skate 3* wants – almost *forces* – you to feel part of a community.

You can tackle any solo-objective with real-life friends – so call a pal in if you're stuck – or team-up and take on other skaters in familiar modes like Death Race, 1-Up, Domination, Street Contests and Hall of Meat Battle.

The game's core objective – if, indeed, there is one – is to build a skateboard brand by completing tasks to sell 'boards' (like points), enlisting new team members, unlocking team HQs and endless licensed gear. Hit a board sales milestone (say 100,000) and you recruit a new team member, who you can design from scratch, and skate with online, and off. In turn, this unlocks team-based objectives, where you film or take photos of your pal to appear in banners dotted around the world. 'Own' a spot – by nailing the top score on it – and your user-designed team logo 'brands' it like a tattoo for all to see. Well, until someone else crushes it.

Sadly, in single-player, there's little fun to be had skating with AI 'pals', and team objectives are too fiddly – you need to manually place a tripod, take control of your buddy using right stick tricks, and tap L1 and R1 at the exact moment to take a photo. It's not an issue with real-life pals, mind, and the scope for creativity is immense. You could, in theory, head to the huge, yawing chasms of the quarry (pictured here), use the Object Dropper to build a 100ft rail, grind it in formation with a team of real-life online friends; all wearing user-designed T-shirts and decks, and decorate the game world with the resulting photo.



Free roaming cameron

David Cameron, beware. *Skate 3's* boggling freedom of choice, is where our political parable begins. As enticing as 'empowerment' (it's in the Tory Party manifesto, which you've read, right?) sounds – the ability to skate anywhere, with anyone, creating your own shirt designs and skate parks – some of us simply need the structures of the nanny state. In other words, we *need* the game to make some decisions for us. The result of all this freedom is that the single-player is largely incoherent,

PSM3 BUY IT

Tweak become heroes The new Easy mode offers kinder physics, Normal is classic *Skate* difficulty and Hardcore makes timing critical, but it's far from unplayable.

and – bar board sales – you don't feel like you're making significant progress.

Skipping school

Skate 2's initially narrow set of objectives unlock hierarchically, so everyone enjoys a similar experience, learning at the same pace. *Skate 3* starts with an all-embracing Skate School (pros can skip it), but after the first few objectives, you're left to attack them in any order you wish – and unlike *Skate 2*, it feels like they're *all* open at once. At any time, you'll have, say, 14 Team Challenges, 6 Death Races, 17 Hall of Meat, 5 Street Contests... and many more tasks to do.

You've no idea if tasks are easy or hard, and the freedom erodes any notion of linear narrative, or the reassuring progression that comes from slowly tackling tougher tasks. Even when you nail a glut of tasks, it's like hacking at a hydra that grows new heads. Don't be misled – the tasks are fun, if familiar, with the usual competitions, film, photo and pro challenges, plus Death Races on thrilling, near-vertical terrain, like the underground sewer. Sadly, for Skate veterans, the familiarity irks, and even having nailed 61 tasks, we're struggling to remember highlights.

If it sounds like we hate *Skate 3*, quite the opposite – functionally, it's the series' best, and the complex, but rewarding, Flick It controls leave you flush with satisfaction every time you nail a 60ft blunt slide, flipping seamlessly to a manual roll. Now, you even get rewarded for 'clean' landings, so style is as important as reflexes. Myriad tiny, powerful tweaks nullify fan gripes, enabling untold freedom and creativity – from the improved off-board movement and flexible replay camera controls (added as DLC in *Skate 2*), to the trick analyzer (visually representing your stick movements to gauge mistakes), manual roll balance meter, and ability to skip songs (L1 + right on the d-pad).

It's friendlier for newcomers, more demanding for veterans. The Skate School explains basic grabs, flips etc, even freezing your skater in mid-air so you can experiment. Equally, you can 'Own' or 'Kill' objectives – either counts as success, but killing them (by performing a more precise, demanding, task like late flipping over a rail, rather than just leaping it) earns more points. Again, we almost miss the maddening 'No way!' tasks of old, that frustrated before yielding huge satisfaction – owning *Skate 3's* tasks is relatively easy for good players, and 'killing' them for points isn't enough incentive.

Skate 3's best when you, or the game, enforce precision onto its rambling world. We've spent 45 minutes in one spot just trying to blunt slide a football goalpost, using objects we dropped into the scenery. The new park editor, and object dropper, tools are intuitive, allowing you to drop ramps, rails, blocks etc into the world at will – the limit is your imagination. With weeks until the servers go live, it

Analyse this Fiddly Flick It moves can be visually represented (see the circle in the centre) to gauge mistakes, plus there's an on/off manual roll balance meter.

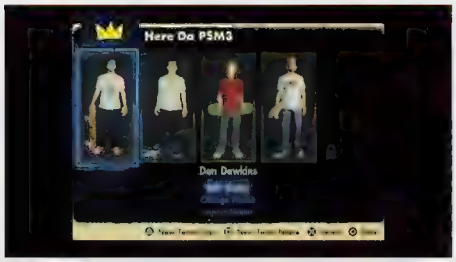
Online ready

You can enter the Online Challenge Map at any time, for co-op or competitive play. You can also browse created parks on a PC/Mac, and add them to a download queue, ready for when you get home.

Team Play

How to build a skateboard brand

Start your own skate company, recruit real-life buddies and 'sell' your labours online



Gang rule Complete tasks to increase board sales and recruit new team members. Here's (most of) the PSM3 team, from left to right: Dan, Andy K, Andy H and Rich. Yes, it is. You can also design your team logo using the online graphics tool.

Face facts You can recruit real-life pals (who are AI-controlled when they're offline, so you can still ride with them). The face editor's only so-so, mind. Perhaps EA will release a DLC pack with more hairstyles. This is, er, Rich. Can't you tell?

Best foot forward Take pics of your team, then perform the same trick in front of their in-game banner. Post-modern, no? You can film your team in-action. If your movies rate high on skate reel, or people 'buy' your shirts, you earn board sales.

Create expectations The park editor tools are intuitive, but wild designs are time intensive.

feels like reviewing the world's most exciting playground before anyone else turns up – as much as we can appraise *Skate 3*'s functionality, scope and invention, we've no idea how the community will develop.

Fear of LittleBigPlanet

Part of us fears being slightly overwhelmed, in an *LBP*-style, with thousands of user-uploaded skate parks. Or intimidated by having our scores decimated by top players, echoing the sadness of playing *SFIV*'s online gods. On the flip side, played with equal-skill friends, and given the friendly *Skate* community, it could be PS3's most inventive, ever-evolving, online game. Imagine joining a crew of real-life friends online, with accurate likenesses; and throwing d-pad gestures at a rival team, before owning them in a spot battle.

Replay it again **You can pause the game, then edit and save replays at any time, or upload them online. Given the potential of the new object dropper and park editor for enabling wild new trick lines, we're terrified to see the top player's skate reel replays, given that *Skate 2* often left us genuinely stunned at folk's skills, creativity and invention. See skate.ea.com/gallery for more.**

Skate 3 isn't to be consumed and disposed like *God of War 3*, but acts as an evolving. dip-in, dip-out, playground; as you self-medicate your level of involvement. You might not have the energy to build a 600-piece skate park based on *Super Mario World*, but nothing stops you from playing someone else's. Empowerment or not, *Skate* retains its essential democracy, where everyone can share in the community's hard work – though some may be more equal than others, when the inevitable raft of premium DLC hits.

Above all, few games offer such liberating, deep and rewarding controls as *Skate 3*; and new city, Port Carverton, is the series most varied, vibrant urban canvas yet. The score below reflects that we played previous *Skate* games to death, hence some ennui, and that we've no idea how the community will develop. For committed online players with like-minded friends, the score could easily tip into the early 90s, and throws into question the very nature of our review process if this is a sign of things to come.

It might only be 16 months since *Skate 2*, but it's testament to *Skate 3*'s quality, flexibility and potential, that the issue of whether it's a revolution, or iteration, will likely take at least as long to discover.

Dan Dawkins

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Skate 3* contains...**
Pixies' Debaser | Intuitive edit tools
Seamless online | Jason Lee

Overall Honed, if familiar fun, but online focus causes solo player wobble.

88

Format PS3 | **Price** £50 | **Release** May 11
Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Multi-player 2-4 co-op, 2-16 Vs | **Trophies** 51

Noddy and big fears These guys hunt by sound, so if you don't move they can't kill you. Bringing them down is a real pain and requires team-work. Better get a mate in.

Lost Planet 2

Co-op injects life into harsh solo player environment

KNOW IT NOW

Fight huge aliens with mates? ☑
Not nearly enough huge aliens? ☑
Duff plot, duff characters? ☑
Worth playing on your own? ☒

We expected more from *Lost Planet 2*. The early trailers and demos pointed towards a relentless sci-fi shooter in an exotic and varied world – with increasingly epic and visually dazzling Akrid boss battles, where you desperately tackle creatures infinitely bigger and pointier than you. The reality is more mundane – a confusing corridor shooter, with uninspiring characters, weak AI and repetitive mission structures, punctuated with the odd enormo-boss fight. Don't be fooled by the screenshots – even fighting a 300ft space worm feels, well, uninspired.

It's worth pointing out that *Lost Planet 2* is a far better game in co-op than in single-player. Levels are designed to have multiple players completing different objectives and ganging up to take down massive bosses together. Get a regular team of four online and you can smash through the main campaign as a squad, and have a blast doing it. Co-op may not solve any of the *LP2*'s baffling design decisions, or monotonous missions, but it does play to the game's strengths – shooting stuff, fragging screen-filling aliens, and stomping around in Vital Suits (mechs). For a full multi-player review, check next issue.

Han So-Low

Tackle *Lost Planet 2* in single player, though, and you're in for a world of hurt. All of a sudden you're doing *everything* yourself. Killing grunts, piloting mechs, opening data posts, repairing gun-turrets... You get three AI team-mates, but instead of contributing they scurry around like lost puppies, soaking up bullets and – on all too frequent occasions – sprinting into your sights the second you've lined up an enemy soldier. 'Hey, nice one (real AI name) DeathSummer – that rocket I fired might have destroyed that enemy Vital Suit if you hadn't thrown yourself in front of it and killed us both'.

Another good reason to get friends involved is so you can all put your heads together to work out some of *Lost*

Mech my day This is one of the smaller bosses. Get inside a Vital Suit and nail those weak spots.

Camper paradise Try not to get too distracted by the big monsters on the hill. This village in the desert is rammed full of snipers, who are all aiming at you.

Planet's bizarre nuances and control systems. Very little makes much sense; select training and you'd expect to be given an overview of the fiddly control system and a brief explanation of how various items work in-game, but instead you're plonked onto a bland VR assault course and expected to get on with it. How do you start? Why does it say 'fail' when you finish? What are you getting trained for? Never explained. That's just the tip of the iceberg – a lyrical cruelty, given that the game's world has thawed since the prequel.

You learn to live with too many aspects by trial and error, mostly at the cost of your enjoyment. How do I open that glowing weapons crate? What the hell is GJ Completion? Why do boxes emblazoned with ?s spill out of every enemy, and what do they actually do?

Wheel of misfortune

Even when you get to grips with its technical terms and funny habits, the design decisions don't make much sense. Why, in a game where customisation of your multi-player avatar is key, do you unlock abilities/items/upgrades via a fruit-machine style game of chance? Fancied a better shotgun for your 2,000 creds? Tough. You've unlocked a new Nom de Guerre that lets you call yourself 'Least Valuable Player' in co-op. Wow, thanks – now I can change my current tag, 'Dog Lover' (no joke).

Shame, because there's so much content, and many of the game's less well sign-posted features make for a great co-op experience – once you get over their awkward, slightly shoe-horned, implementation. Two-man Vital Suits? Cool. Hidden weapon functions? Nice – almost worth trawling through multiple pause menus to discover, and pulling off finger-crippling button-prompts to perform. Almost. Getting to grips with everything on offer does eventually reward, but only the patient and those willing to turn their back on gaming logic will get close to £50 worth of enjoyment. **Andy Hartup**

Getting Emo

You can emote at any time by holding START and pressing a trigger or d-pad button. Our favourites are the manly gun-wave and the not-so-manly giddy school-girl dance. You can unlock new ones too.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Lost Planet 2* contains...**
Huge bosses | Glowing weak-spots
Awful AI friendlies | Hidden depth

Overall Co-op can be a blast, but solo players will get frustrated by dodgy AI and repetition.

71

Format PS3 | Price £50 | Release May 21
Pub Disney | Dev Black Rock Studio
Multi-player 1-8 | Trophies 50

Split/Second

Explosive *Burnout* tribute stops just short of turning your knuckles white

Games are young and naïve, so they hang out with older boys – movies – to be cool. They smoke and nod sagely at whatever movies do, aping their moves, desperate to be mistaken for one. And they're just too star-struck to see their idols are mainly bloated, frantic and sad.

Black Rock are one of the few developers to see that games' similarities to film are over-stressed – it's the differences that make them more powerful than anything. For instance, in reality you can't throw a battleship at a car. In films, you can throw battleships around, but it'll cost a fortune. In games, however, it's as easy as filling the screen with anything else. All you need is the imagination to make it happen, which is where *Split/Second* excels.

Self-aware *Split/Second* is refreshingly honest about being an arcade racer. It just likes to blow stuff up.

The power cosmic

So in *Split/Second*, you'll topple colossal towers and then career up the remains, raze office blocks and cooling towers, and race along sinking aircraft carriers. You can also cause helicopters to drop bombs and make cranes sweep earth-moving machinery across the road to crash the other racers, although it's remarkably cheerful for such extreme violence. There are no human figures, so no 'deaths' here... After all, it's published by Disney, a company with its primal lust for blood so firmly in check that it can televise Miley Cyrus.

Handling is like *Burnout*, only not as good. It's close, but the steering is a little thick and the responses of even the most mental cars is too sluggish. More damningly, it's often quicker not to drift, and impacts are curiously lifeless given the destruction all around. But then, while we lost a fair few times – usually right on the finish line, which is just annoying – we hardly ever crashed. It's not catastrophic, just a little limp.

Shame, because *Split/Second* solves several thorny design problems in one go. It's basically racing with weapons, but without the control nightmare of aiming a car and gun at the same time. It also moves on from the 'drift to earn boost' standard. Here, you drive madly to earn 'power plays'. Press the button and something blows up or collapses. Time it right to wave sayonara to your esteemed competitors.

A few dings

Get the gauge into the red and you can activate mega-events, such as the launch of a battleship, in a few designated spots on each track. But you must also save some power in order to activate the shortcuts that need opening on each lap. This should all add up to something quite tactical, but we rarely knew what we were about to blow up or where our rivals were in relation to it. We just blew up everything we could.

Inevitably, it works online if you think a child racist from Swindon is what this needs, but there's also a split-screen option for those old-fashioned enough to enjoy physically assaulting players acting like dicks 'at source', as it were. How quaint. The barrel dodging Survival mini-game – played in a version of Terminator 2's

Fave Feature

"Having trophies shown off as decals on your car"

KNOW IT NOW

- Collapsing a map's worth of buildings? ✓
- Exploding pretty made-up cars? ✓
- Racing along sinking ships? ✓
- Fully taxed and insured? ✗

dam - has all the score-chasing, 'one more go' hallmarks of *Burnout*'s infamous crash junctions.

Our early review code is a little rough around the edges, but we're assured the various glitches and warps will be buffed smoother than David Cameron's face before launch (of the game, not Dave's face). Still, Black Rock know how to deliver a polished game, as their luscious quad-racer *Pure* showed.

So. It's messy fun that slightly under-delivers. The episodic, reality TV conceit feels tacked on (with the sound turned off,

Free Roam This

Beyond straight races lie a host of inventive modes, involving barrels bouncing from big rigs, helicopters with missiles and tracks detonating around you. What do you mean, where's the Time Trial mode?

Chop chop Reality TV our arse. Who in real life has a private air force on call for their racing needs?

you'd mistake it for a standard racer), but thankfully it's so flimsily attached that it's irrelevant and spoils nothing. Consequently, *Split/Second* is better than Hollywood, less impressive than *Burnout* and more amusing than both of them. **Steven Williams**

PSM3 Verdict

***Split/Second* contains...**
Made-up cars | Huge explosions
Rubbish crashes | Madcap creativity

Overall Brilliantly chaotic and rapid, but lacking that killer edge.

80

Format PS3 | **Price** £40 | **Release** Out now
Pub Southpeak | **Dev** Atlus
Multi-player None | **Trophies** 50

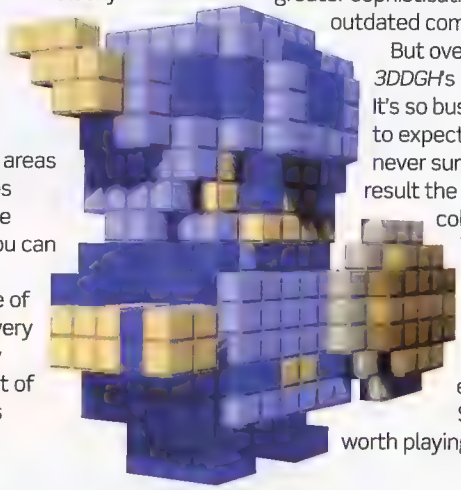
Extension Your sword's length, width and overall power can be upgraded to screen filling size at the local blacksmiths.

3D Dot Game Heroes

It looks like Lego but plays a bit *too* much like Zelda

Playing *3D Dot Game Heroes* your first thought is that Michael Gondry, director of White Stripes video Fell In Love With A Girl, has started to branch out. Your second is just how are Atlus getting away with grand theft gaming? It isn't so much an homage to Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda* series as a rip off. From certain lines of dialogue to top down dungeons to the musical score, *3DDGH*'s inspiration looms large. Only that bizarre but beautiful visual style sets it apart.

Your blocky character must travel the blocky land in search of blocky sages imprisoned in blocky dungeons. Along the way you collect items that allow you access to new areas and more sages trapped in more dungeons. If you can ignore the creeping sense of déjà vu it's all very nice in a comfy old blanket sort of way. Highlights include some seriously tough boss fights, some bizarre fetch quests and the odd bit of ribald humour – just don't get talked into purchasing a 'poofy poofy' for yourself at the inn.



Shoulders of giants

But *3DDGH* struggles to emerge from its inspiration's shadow; it highlights what's great about the *Zelda* games without ever topping them. The puzzles contained within the dungeons are clever enough but they lack the watchmaker intricacy of those it seeks to copy. The smart visual style hints at greater sophistication than the outdated combat.

But over familiarity is *3DDGH*'s biggest problem. It's so busy trying to live up to expectations that it never surpasses them. As a result the pleasure at collecting a new item to gain access to fresh areas is dulled because it's the exact item you expected to find. So is *3DDGH* worth playing? Yes if you have a great deal of affection for the series that so clearly inspired it. As adventure games go this is as lovingly made and well structured as you could hope for but if you're of the mind that the *Zelda* series has been recycling the same ideas for far too long now then *3D Dot Game Heroes* will only exacerbate your grounded frustrations. **Rory Smith**

Build your own You get the chance to build your own character pixel by pixel. Its easy enough to do but anyone hoping to render Kratos in fine detail will be frustrated by the lack of pixels. There's plenty of great presets to choose from too.

Old-school The game's bosses can be tough if you don't find empty bottles and pack some potions.

PSM3 Verdict

***3D Dot Game Heroes* contains...**
Blocky graphics | Fiendish dungeons
Innuendo | Lots of colour

Overall A great looking, fun and occasionally clever homage to *Zelda*.

68

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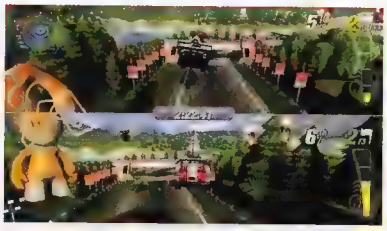
Format PS3 | **Price** £50 | **Release** May 21
Pub Sony | **Dev** United Front Games
Multi-player 1-12 | **Trophies** 47

ModNation Racers

Make your own favourite racing game

After years of having to deal with petulant games journalists, vocal forum members and an increasingly fussy buying public, we're not surprised that more and more developers are turning to us and saying "Fine! You don't like what we've done? Why don't you bloody do it yourself, then?" After all, if we are given the responsibility of creating the game, we're going to make ours absolutely perfect, right?

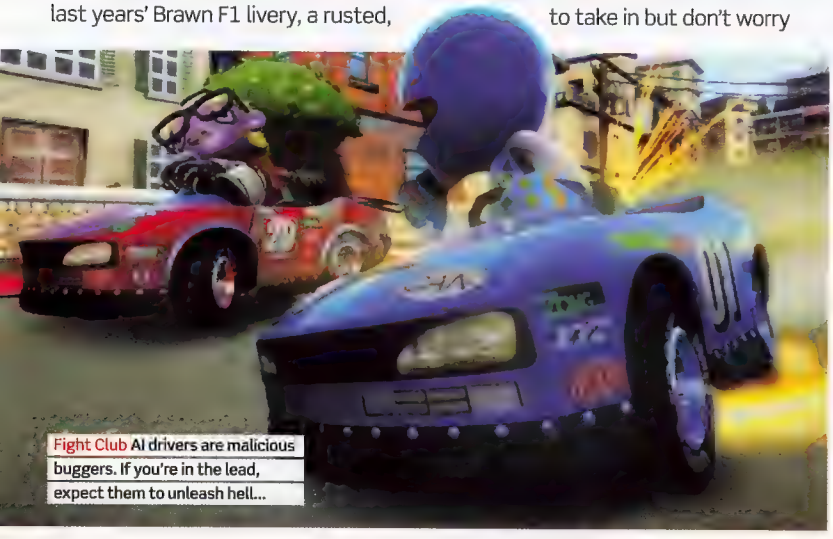
This is where we put our hands up and say "no". We're staring at our little blank, naked kart racer with a head like a boiled egg and we've got 'developer's block'. We've got a blank canvas, endless opportunities and we don't know what to do. It doesn't help that *ModNation Racers*' brief beta trial showed how clever you could be if your mind worked quick enough; Kratos, Kermit the Frog, Spider-Man, Captain America, a *Killzone* soldier, Mario, Sonic. If you've thought of it, chances are somebody has already made it. Even if you haven't, you'll kick yourself for not thinking of it first. In the end we created our version of The Stig (easy, already been done better), Chun Li (took ages, looked crap, already been done) and internet meme Techno Viking (but only because we started with the beard). Equally bereft of innovative ideas, we also managed to cobble together a kart that sported last years' Brawn F1 livery, a rusted, 'rat look' muscle car and, er, a camouflaged school bus. You'll see our sorry excuse for a track later and realise *MNR's* potential stretches far further than the creator's imagination...



Split Decision Modnation Racers also accommodates two to four-player, offline split-screen racing.

Kart beat

In case you haven't worked it out already, *MNR* is a Do It Yourself arcade kart racing game in the vein of *LittleBigPlanet*. From your Modspot (read: hub) you'll be able to access the Career Mode, which serves as a tutorial, inspiration and method to unlock pieces for the other part of *MNR* – the Creation Station. It's here where you create drivers, karts and, more importantly, tracks to use for yourself or share with the online world. Modspot will also be the place to start multi-player races, ogle some of the clever creations other people have made and be teased with premium content so you can pay money for new shoes and moustaches. It sounds like a lot to take in but don't worry



Fight Club AI drivers are malicious buggers. If you're in the lead, expect them to unleash hell...

KNOW IT NOW

- An unforgiving campaign? ☑
- Gordon Freeman in a Lowrider? ☑
- Circuits as mad as your imagination? ☑
- Rude-shaped race tracks allowed? ☒

Munny Talks The racers themselves remind us of the Kidrobot 'Munny' toys. It's no coincidence that, like the *MNR* drivers, these vinyl figures are supplied blank so you can add your own design.

PSM3 BUY IT

Custom course

Track Attack!

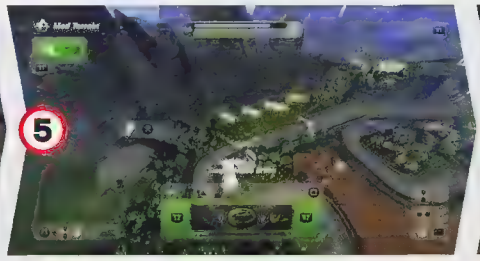
How we crafted our own PS3 inspired circuit...

Best laid plans We decided to go for a high concept track. Look closely (at the next picture) and you'll see how the circuit has been created to read 'PS3' from space. Clever, huh? We tried 'PSM3' but the 'M' didn't link so well to the other letters. To lay track you simply drive a big tarmac-laying steamroller...

Rollercoasting We add a few flourishes; a floating spiral of track that raises up before dropping to the finish, a massive water hazard, and a cheeky short-cut between the P and the S. This was achieved by changing the trajectory of the steamroller and raising the water level in the terrain editor.

Green belt We choose the jungle setting, which means the default prop selections are suitably rainforest-y. But it's still a race-track; so we add things like spectator stands, billboards and a host of other regular racing stuff. The scene props menu makes this a simple process.

Hands-on After a few practice laps in a kart (you don't have to leave the editor to do this) we discovered small problems; the exit to the shortcut needs signage to tell racers which way to turn when they exit, plus the climb up the spiral looks a bit boring. Back to the drawing board...



All in the details No problem; flashing corner signs sort the shortcut issue. Plus, we make a volcano to fill some of the background of the emptier parts of the track. It serves as a place to plant more props to keep your eyes busy as you climb. We start dropping weapon pickups for extra carnage...

Labour of love Looking good. We spent about three hours making this, but half of it was faffing about with little touches. Imagine what you could make if you had a whole weekend spare. If you ask us, making the tracks is actually more fun than driving them. Weird, huh?

– *the* editing tools are the most accessible and intuitive to date.

Unlike *LBP*, which can rely heavily on a gamers' knowledge of intricate mechanics and physics, *MNR* is – at its most basic level – is easy as drawing a loop. While *LBP* might require countless elements before you have manufactured an entertaining, and barely functional level, *MNR* excels because creating a functional raceway is idiot proof. If you can make a track with a Scalextric kit, you can make a race-worthy circuit in *MNR*. With the added bonus of not having to hunt around for a missing corner piece or needing to replace metal brushes.

Circuit breaker

ModNation Racers isn't the first memorable racing game with the ability to create your own content; we've been making circuits since the ancient *4D Sports Driving* or *V-Rally 2* on PSone. Let us not forget the successful (and much more recent) *Trackmania* either. But *ModNation* is in a different league. Again, key to its accomplishment is the trouble-free implementation. Complex components like jumps, overpasses, short-cuts and terrain changes are as simple as painting the track with a virtual brush. All the calculations go on behind the scenes while you're free to plan your dream track, craft it, and then upload it for the world to judge. We can't wait to see what happens once the more ingenious and creative gamers are let loose with the tools. Considering how sophisticated and potentially complicated the make-your-own sections could've been, it's surprising that the career mode races are the most frustrating part. *MNR*

Tarmac Daddy United Front show the way with inspirational tracks.

"Complex components and terrain changes are as simple as painting the track with a brush"

I Will Survive Drifting will fill an on-screen meter. Press R1 to use it as nitrous, or use ◎ to deplete the meter as a strategic weapon-deflecting shield.

feels typical as far as kart racing goes (big drifts and bigger jumps with weapon-based pickups). The selection of rockets, lightning bolts and speed boosts will be familiar to anyone who has ever played a karting game. Sadly, things were sullied slightly; we experienced some annoyingly artificial rubber banding (where slower racers get speed boosts to make events more competitive). It keeps things tight, but also means that no matter how well you drive, a win can be unfairly snatched at any moment. When you take into account the objectives you need to meet in your average race (score 10000 drift points, find and knock down ten concealed objects, attack a specific opponent in front of the grandstands and *finish* first) to unlock new parts, it can be irritating to repeat races. Particularly if you scored the drift points, got the bad guy, knocked over ten objects and then failed all of them because you came second. All we wanted was a bloody aerial shaped like a fishing rod for our cardboard car: is that too much to ask?

Even if *MNR* was 'just' a racing game, the annoyances would be minor niggles. But *ModNation Racers* is far more than a kart game – it's the new friendly face of DIY gaming. The creation tools are accessible and the editing mechanics comfortably familiar – more so than any other 'make your own' style game on PS3. It even caters to classic, often overlooked, split-screen racing alongside conventional 12-player online play. It's the only kart racer you'll ever need, and although not the best racing experience out there, it's certainly the most fun. And if you don't enjoy what's on offer, you've only yourself to blame... **Shaun Curnow**

Brawn Again For the secret F1 geek, we present to you own Brawn car inspired kart. Look closely and you'll see we've changed 'Brawn' for 'Prawn'. Guffaw!

Rival racer
If you complete all objectives in a race you'll face that series' 'villain' character. Beat them and you'll win their unlockables.

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***ModNation Racers* contains...**
Wacky races | Intuitive editing
Frustrating objectives | Potential

Overall Simple, smart editing tools and sound racing make this the king of kart racers.

91

Format PS3 | **Price** £40 | **Release** Out now
Pub EA | **Dev** EA Canada
Multi-player 1-7 | **Trophies** 43

Home help Teams display authentic tactics, but the mooted home advantage effect is hard to discern in our experience.

PSM3 BUY IT

2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa

Like England: potentially world class... in the right conditions

KNOW IT NOW

Authentically licensed? ☑
The best *FIFA* gameplay yet? ☑
Longevity boosting online modes? ☑
Club teams and tournaments? ☒

EA's *World Cup* games used to suffer from a lack of effort; now they're built to look *effortless*. *2010 FIFA World Cup* exudes the confidence of a development team at the top of their game – orchestrating the bigger picture with myriad subtle prods and pokes, like Zinedine Zidane in his majestic, late 90s pomp – rather than relying on showy gimmicks to deflect attention from fundamental weaknesses.

What's changed since *FIFA 10*? Loads. EA claim over 100 gameplay improvements, the majority obscenely subtle, though no less welcome. Keepers are quicker off their line, headers are punchier, players more physical in collisions, short passes crisper, chesting no longer leads to infuriating player 'freezing' and player/situation specific animations are more expressive. Simply, it plays *better*.

Touch of class

For example, when using the right stick first touch, Bellamy might flick a bouncing ball over his head to keep momentum, rather than trapping it on the ground, while midfield schemers like Fabregas might automatically opt to heel flick a one-touch pass in a crowded midfield. Shooting also benefits from context-sensitive animations, resulting in goals like Joe Cole's delicate flick in the recent Manchester United game with a simple tap of the shoot button.

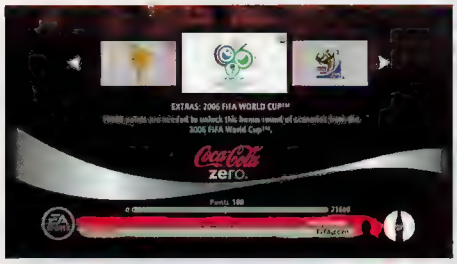
Visually, it's brighter and crisper than *FIFA 10*, with – for the World Cup teams at least – improved likenesses. Sadly, for fans of Ireland, Wales and, er, Aruba, 'star' players like Damien Duff are decent, but more generic – forgivable, given the 199 team roster. There are new, more ostentatious, goal celebrations – Heskey doing the moonwalk never fails – plus authentic manager likenesses, although the cut-scene breaks start to intrude.

The penalty system is deeper, but initially bewildering. You need to stop an oscillating 'composure' bar in its central sweet spot, then direct the shot 'blind' using analogue pushes. Top players have a bigger sweet spot, but the bar speeds up subject to the occasion. Problem is, even when you nail the composure, gauging the length of analogue stick pushes is highly

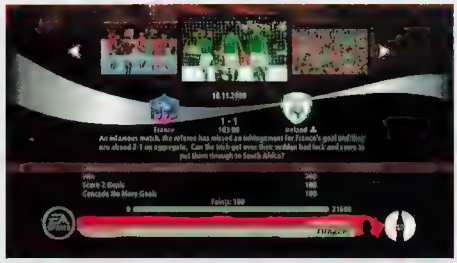
Modes

Merde! Right the wrongs of Henry's handball

FIFA's Story of Qualifying scenario mode lets you replay real life games and re-write history



Original Scene There's 45 World Cup 2010 qualifying scenarios (from Europe to CONCACAF), plus games from the 2006 World Cup finals and – via DLC – the 2010 finals. We'll kick off with the infamous Ireland vs France 'Henry handball' match...



Eire Ire The commentary is match-specific, so Clive Tyldesley talks about about Gallas' infamous goal and how Henry 'clearly handballed' as you prepare to kick off in the 103rd minute of extra time – an atmospheric, motivating, touch.

Sub Way Scenarios are accurate to the last detail, so players start the scenario with real-life yellow cards, and – in Ireland's case – low stamina. You've only got one substitution left, too – choosing from the same subs bench as the real-life event.

Ground Force There are ten authentic stadiums, plus anthems and team-specific commentary.

demanding. Initially, your shots either go straight, or blaze wide. The practice arena lets you see how the 'invisible' shot pointer responds to your analogue pushes, but in-game, it's still slightly nebulous. Our tip? Practice. A lot.

Button up

The new, optional, 'two button' control scheme screams father/son play, mapping complex controls – fairly intuitively – to two buttons. Tap, or hold, pass, and the game will play the appropriate through ball, or lofted pass; hold shoot, and it chooses between precision strikes, chips and blasts. It's surprisingly effective, but on higher difficulty, feels a bit like attempting heart surgery with artificially intelligent forks, not surgical implements. Still, it's another smart addition to broaden the game's appeal.

What's it like online?

Battle of the Nations mode means every online game contributes to an individual – and country-specific – leaderboard, while there's ten divisions with relegation and promotion, making it easier to find players of similar skill. You can play Captain Your Country in online co-op, too. Expect a review next month.

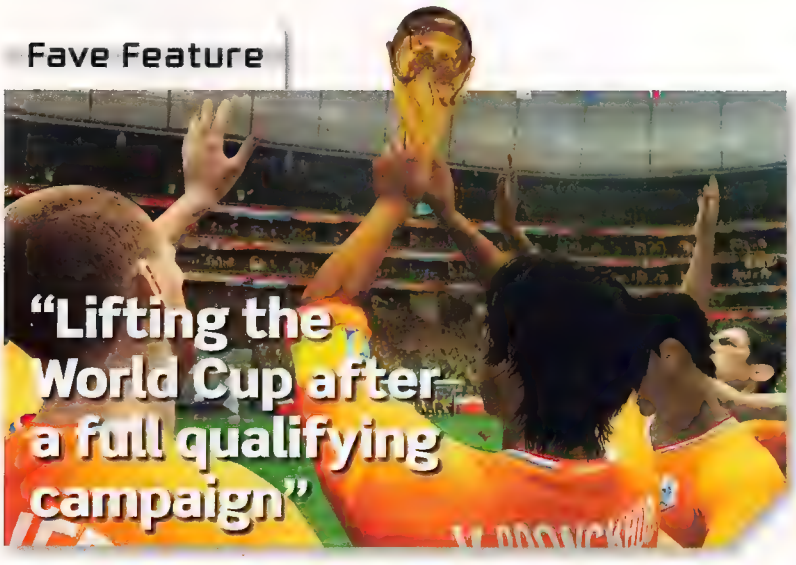
There's an admirable range of modes – from the Be A Pro aping Captain Your Country, to Story of Qualifying (see above), to a full World Cup qualifying campaign, leading up to the finals. Thing is, seeing your players lift the World Cup is only truly magical first time out. Our advice? Play one difficulty level higher than usual to prolong the experience. We, er, had to replay the World Cup final 13 times, before Wales finally bested Brazil on World Class difficulty, but the roar was audible this side of Aberystwyth.

FIFA WC's online modes will be the test of its longevity, but as we type, the servers aren't live. More next month – but given *FIFA 10*'s proficiency, they're unlikely to disappoint.

Gripes? Mid-match menus are slow as ever, making substitutions really irks, and the lack of club teams or non-World Cup tournaments is an unavoidable loss – but it's as broad as the limited scope allows, and as a *game*, unarguably better than *FIFA 10*.

Essential? *Almost* – but only if you're committed to playing online or with mates. As a solo game, it's as authentic as you'd hope, and the scenarios prolong longevity – but the focused approach is inherently limiting. Effortless as they make it look, EA have set a dauntingly high watermark for *FIFA 11* – leaving *Pro Evo* with all the busy work to catch up. **Dan Dawkins**

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***FIFA World Cup 2010* contains...**
Atmospheric crowds | Superb gameplay | Penalty woe | 199 teams

Overall The best *FIFA* yet, but a post width shy of vital for solo players.

89

Format PS3 | **Price** £45 | **Release** Out now
Pub Namco Bandai | **Dev** Blitz Games
Multi-player None | **Trophies** 50

Turn the tables When punching fails, use *DTR*'s disposable guns. Disarming weapon-toting opponents sets you up for a perfect headshot if you time it right.

Dead to Rights Retribution

Cop and canine chum are dedicated to chewing down on crime...

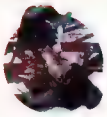
Sometimes, all a guy can do to keep his city clean is trip a criminal goon, stamp on his shin so his bone snaps, and then – while he's on the floor screaming for mercy and staring at his shattered skeleton – kick him in the head so hard that he dies.

We're not sure that Jack Slate read the right police manual, really, but by god, he gets results. Dumped into the game with a busted shoulder and little explanation of how he came to be roughed up so badly, Jack then employs an array of weaponry – both guns and his lethal limbs – in the pursuit of justice. And for 'justice', read 'killing everyone in town.'

Combat is swift and satisfying: ◎ and △ handle heavy and light punches, leading into simple combos. Foes that get truly battered open up the play to finishing moves – the gruesomely effective killing blows described in the opening paragraph. Combining these batter-fests with weaponry makes for some truly horrible scenes – get a rifle and you'll summarily kneecap your target, before smirking and smacking him in the head with your gun's butt, riddling his bleeding corpse with lead as he flies backwards. Nice.

Wolf like me

Worryingly, Jack's the good cop in the old routine. Bad cop is played with aplomb by doggy colleague Shadow. Shadow is usually on-hand to mix up your murders – sending him to attack a foe is as simple as a d-pad click when controlling Jack. Combining Jack and Shadow's attacks stays surprisingly fresh throughout, and you'll find yourself happily chaining punches, snap headshots and de-testiculations, thanks to each system feeling solid and well implemented. With so many kill combinations on offer, there's the danger of slipping into one combat style that suits, but *DTR:R* manages to sidestep this fatigue neatly; its combat engine rewarding experimentation.



Going dogging **Some missions see you taking Shadow on a solo outing, to tackle areas Jack can't reach. As the dog you can pull off silent kills by flipping bad-guys over and ripping out their throats. You can also bite them in the 'nads. Ouch.**

Despite strong combat, *Retribution* still feels a bit B-movie. The meat of the game is brutish, but the story – an entirely generic cop thriller – is fully aware of its schlock status, and gets voiced well. It nails its achievable aims – solid, visceral and varied action – and is a good, unchallenging way to spend ten hours. Just don't expect it to grab you by the throat. **Rich McCormick**

PSM3 Verdict

***Dead to Rights* contains...**
Kicking | Punching | Chewing Murdering | Ball busting

Overall Dumb action shooter elevated by solid man-punching and smart dog-play.

74

Gaming news
to get your
teeth into...
SONY
CVG
computerandvideogames.com

Jeepers Meesta Madcap puzzles are backed up by a crisp script.

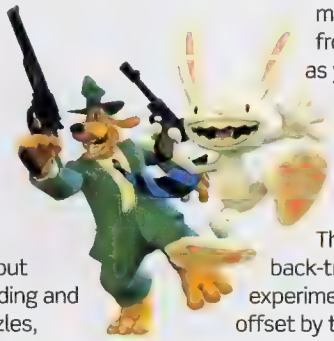
Telltale Games | PSN | Out now

Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse

Point-and-click that's worth a punt

God bless PSN. If it wasn't for Sony's digital delivery service, which allows publishers to bring quirky, lower-budget games (and genres) to our console, the world would be a duller place.

Sam & Max is a point-and-click adventure split into five episodes (we've only played episode one: *The Penal Zone*) that arrive once a month. It's slow-paced, technically undemanding, but above all rewarding and funny. The puzzles, despite being extremely obscure – one sees you saving a man with a peanut allergy by giving him a hard hat with a lamp on it, so he can see the offending legumes hidden in his spaghetti – are well thought out. You're often prompted to come to the necessarily mad conclusions by Sam or Max making off-hand comments too.



Rabbiting on

There's plenty of play here as well. The first episode alone is worth three to four hours of adventuring, although that mostly comes from trial and error as you scratch your head while wondering how to get hold of an item, or who to talk to next. Thankfully, any back-tracking and experimentation are offset by the sharp, often hilarious, script. **Andy Hartup**

PSM3 Verdict

Great value, if stubbornly old school and a little obscure.

86

Fishy business Talking to the game's cast of zany characters is essential to progress.

Sega | PSN | Out now

After Burner: Climax

Pricey but nicey retro remake

Like drift-racer *OutRun* before it, *After Burner* is the latest Sega classic to get an HD remake and a release on PSN. Out of the two, *OutRun Online Arcade* is still the one to go for – there's much more bang for your buck there. *After Burner: Climax* features a reworked version of the Arcade mode, which – despite looking lovely in HD and being incredibly satisfying to play – only amounts to about ten minutes of fun. Sure, you can change some variables in the main Arcade by fiddling with EX options (get a bigger targeting reticule, more credits, an auto-gun and so on), but if anything that makes your play-throughs shorter.

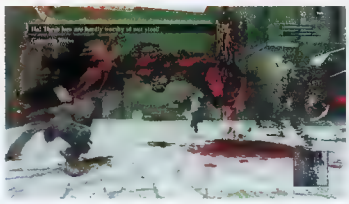
Elsewhere, there's a Score Attack mode that enables you to up upload your scores to online leaderboards, but that's pretty much it. We'd liked to have seen more substance here to go with the new style and, as such, can't recommend it for £7.99. **Andy Hartup**

65

Square Enix | PS3 | Out now

Nier

Not *Nier*-ly good enough



Appropriately for a game where you use the written word to smite enemies, *Nier* sounds great on paper. It's a Square Enix RPG with real-time combat and a look more tailored to Western adults than Japanese adolescents. But it tries too hard. Even before you reach the title screen, your ears are bludgeoned with cuss words that would make your average *Final Fantasy* character blush.

After that the game feels, at times, tiresomely familiar. The organic magic attacks may have borrowed their style from *Bayonetta*, but their application isn't as imaginative. Even the idea of binding words to abilities for upgrades isn't as innovative as it sounds.

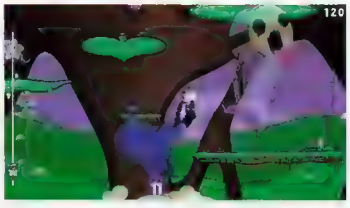
On the plus side, the slightly dated looking graphics recall *Ico*, the music is beautiful and the constantly shifting camera angles make the best of the crudely constructed dungeons. *Nier* is no classic but it's no dud either. It's just made to look pedestrian by other JRPGs, most notably *FFXIII*. **Rory Smith**

67

Sony | PSP Mini | Out now

Monsters (Probably) Stole My Princess!

It's (definitely) very good



This is an upward-scrolling platformer in which The Duke – an egotistical, vampirish aristocrat – goes in search of his (probably) stolen princess. The story crosses six distinctive worlds, each with its own monster that can be defeated by three double-jump attacks – but only after racking up a massive combo. A combo is built by landing on different platforms in succession; touching one twice resets you to zero. High combos are rewarded with a stunning finisher.

M(P)SMP makes the most of its simple mechanics. Stages are laid out imaginatively, forcing you to use your brain, not just your reflexes. To get the highest combo, you must plan your route; the closest platform isn't always best. Precision is required, but wall jumps can redeem fumbles, and they're needed to reach the highest platforms.

Ultimately, Mediatonic's first Mini isn't essential title, but you (probably) wouldn't regret buying it. **Sean O'Connor**

79

TKE | PSP | May 7

What Did I Do To Deserve This, My Lord!? 2

Sort-of sequel digs deep

What Did I Do 2 isn't so much a sequel as a second crack of the whip. The clever original's core is unchanged – you strategically dig a dungeon to maintain its monstrous ecosystem and make mulch of would-be raiding parties – but various tweaks have been made.

New missions, monsters, mutations and a Freeplay mode add depth, but for the most part the new additions are cosmetic. That's a good thing – the refreshed presentation is at its best fleshing out the Tutorial/Challenge mode. Suddenly, the intricacies of the game are far clearer and the improved main game is more enjoyable as a result. Before long, even newcomers will be merrily digging up dragons and demons.

And that's really the only major flaw here: more is done to entice new players than to please faithful fans. It's a tune up rather than a follow up, but it's a brilliant, and occasionally very funny, strategy title all the same. **Rory Smith**

73

Sony | PSP | Out now

Fat Princess: Fistful of Cake

Snack sized but satisfying

In what is possibly the most seamless transition ever, *Fat Princess* has reached PSP with its original content, plus an additional six new levels, battlefields and four new multi-player modes, including the excellent Demolition where you terrorise your opponent by dropping a bomb on their royal throne.

Making your princess a plumper (harder to carry) princess (flag) by feeding her cake is still at the heart of the game. As is the combination of simple, yet fun, hack'n'slash combat with RTS-style resource management. Its manic gameplay, quirky sense of humour and colourful presentation are a perfect fit for the PSP.

The one major negative is the return of the terrible AI that let down the PS3 version, but by getting your PSP online via a Wi-Fi connection, you can compete with up to eight intelligent humans. It's not as intense an experience as on PS3, but still riotous fun and where *Fat Princess* is at its best.

81

Sean O'Connor

Sony | PSN | Out now

Patchwork Heroes

Fun but repetitive gameplay

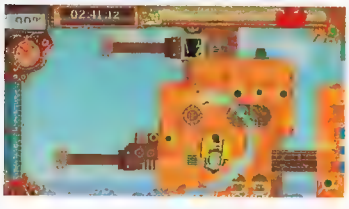
In a world where endless waves of flying warships are on a head-on course for your city, you play the hero who savagely saws apart these giant monoliths until they fall from the sky.

To think of *Patchwork* as a mindless demolition game would be doing it an injustice. Players need be strategic about where they use bombs, where to saw and when to go into a hyper 'mojo' state. Missions are complicated further by prisoners in need of rescuing, and by robots skilled in the art of repairing – and killing you. Much skill is needed to complete *Patchwork* 100%, but few will want to invest the required time for this.

The reason: *Patchwork Heroes* has much to offer: thoughtful gameplay, an amusing story and a unique cardboard cut-out (covered in patchwork) art style, but a lack of variation means that the distinctive look isn't quite enough to keep things interesting to the very end, especially when the assets start to get recycled and the difficulty ramps up dramatically.

72

Sean O'Connor



PSM3 Awards

The highs (and lows) of this month's reviews

The Extremely Customisable award goes to... ModNation Racers. Surely one of the best creation tools on PS3, even rivaling *LittleBigPlanet*. And the game isn't half bad either.

The Retro Evolved award goes to...

3D Dot Game Heroes

This is the issue's most striking looking game, even if the gameplay isn't up to much. The idea of rendering a NES-style 2D game in 3D is inspired, and the pixel-based character creator is very nicely done.

The Insane Scale award goes to...

Lost Planet 2

Not many games let you take down a boss from inside its stomach. *Lost Planet 2*'s transition from battling outside, to inside, a beast is one of its boldest features. If only the game was better.

Hi-Score Table

ModNation Racers	p90 91%
FIFA World Cup 2010	p94 89%
Skate 3	p80 88%
Sam & Max: TDP	p98 86%
Fat Princess: FOC	p99 81%
Split/Second	p86 80%
Monsters (Probably) Stole My Princess	p98 79%
Dead to Rights	p76 74%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord 2	p98 73%
Patchwork Heroes	p99 72%
Lost Planet 2	p76 71%
3D Dot Game Heroes	p88 68%
Nier	p98 67%
After Burner: Climax	p98 65%

PSM3 Watch out...

Buyer beware! The games they didn't send us...

Iron Man 2

Sega | PS3

After the severe beating we gave the last Iron Man (PSM101, 36%), we're not surprised Sega didn't send us the sequel for review. Movie tie-ins are often guff, but this looks notably so.

When it came out 30/04

How To Train Your Dragon

Activision | PS3

This new big budget 3D animated film from DreamWorks has spawned an inevitable game spin-off, and just as inevitably, we haven't received a review copy. *Surprising.*

When it came out 26/03

Dante's Inferno

EA | PSP

Yeah, that's right: *Dante's Inferno* came out on PSP. Although we didn't get a copy to review, and there was next to no advertising. It's *almost* as if PSP has become a burden for publishers...

When it came out 26/02

Metal awards shows just got hotter!
METAL HAMMER
GOLDEN GODS
2010
To vote and win tickets, go to...
WWW.METALHAMMER.CO.UK
mflow
Marshall
AMPLIFICATION
ROADRUNNER RECORDS
Jackson
SONISPHERE FESTIVAL
Alchemy
Jagermeister
Special thanks to Lora / The Sirens and everyone at The Spearmint Rhino

Extended Play

Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

WALL OF SHOTS

25 Sega revivals in Sonic All-Stars Racing

Shadow to Samba – celebrate Sega's heritage via the medium of kart racing

Extended Play section

Ten awesome things to see and do in *Just Cause 2*

FFXIII's hardest boss: found and fought

Plus MORE

Start

102 HISTORY
PlayStation's most hated characters
Celebrating gaming's rich history.

104 TOP TEN
Amazing moments in *Just Cause 2*
Includes a dead, beached whale.

108 WALL OF SHOTS
The best cameos in *Sonic All-Stars Racing*
PlayStation's deepest, maddest and most detailed games exploded in visual detail.

110 [illegible]
Killed by a giant cactus in *FFXIII*
Defining moments from classic – and not so classic – games.

111 SECRETS, EASTER EGGS AND TIPS
Featuring *Just Cause 2* and *God Of War III*
This month's five best cheats, plus the best content.

112 RETRO REVIEW
Vagrant Story
We look back at a classic, potentially overlooked game and see if it's still worth playing.

Any thoughts about what you'd like to see in Extended Play? Mail them to psm3@futurenet.com. Tweet us at twitter.com/psm3_magazine or post on the forum @ psm3mag.com

PlayStation's most hateful characters

Some game characters just can't help getting up our noses. Whether they're constantly getting kidnapped or butting in with lame one-liners, their presence only serves to infuriate. Despite most of the characters below having awesome powers or starring in great games, their sheer hatefulness manages to somehow transcend all the good. They're the irritating voice that makes us reach for the mute button on our TV. The tiresome comedic relief that makes us skip cut-scenes. Hell, they're the reason we leave some games rotting on the shop shelf. So take a deep breath, try to find that happy place and prepare yourself for the most hateful characters in PlayStation's history.

ASHLEY GRAHAM

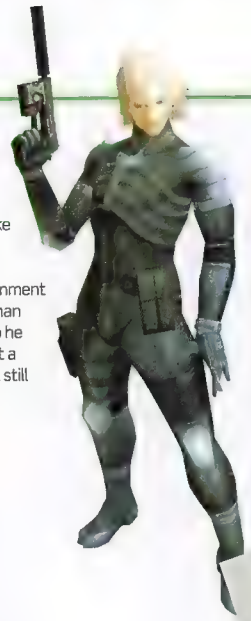
Game Resident Evil 4 **Format** PS2
Officially the most kidnapped character in the history of games - seriously, Miss Graham gets lifted by *Resi 4*'s evil Los Illuminados cult 114 times. If we're not having to rescue her from hooded men who want to shove parasites down her throat, we're having to sneak past monsters as we control her in annoying puzzle sections. She may be the President's daughter, but it's clear the leader of the free world didn't spend much on her education. Dim-witted, shrill and forever asking stupid questions, if we were Leon we'd gladly let her get decapitated by chainsaw-wielding nutters .
Hate Rating

DAXTER

Game Daxter **Format** PSP
Half otter, half weasel; all utterly hateful 'comedy' relief. As an annoying sidekick in the *Jak* games he's just about bearable. Well, if we stick our fingers in our ears and hum loudly whenever he opens his furry gob. But the moment he gets his own PSP spin-off, the hate gets cranked up to a level we can only imagine being topped by a joint Jar Jar Binks/Ewoks stand-up act. With a mouth the size of the Eurotunnel and comedic quips as funny as syphilis, Daxter is one of the most painful, obnoxious PlayStation characters ever.
Hate Rating

THE ADORING FAN

Game The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion **Format** PS3
Clearly, nobody's ever heard of a restraining order in Cyrodiil. A creepy hero-worshipping cretin, *Oblivion*'s horribly devoted fan follows our playable character around constantly. Regardless of how much of a saint or evil doer we choose to become, this adoring a-hole will act like our shadow rain or shine. He's also full of brown nosing compliments, which disturbingly, usually end with him wanting to give us a backrub. As weird man-children go, he's the most obsessive, stalky one we can think of. Thankfully, his infuriating ass-kissing can be countered by leading him deep into a wolf-infested cave and telling him to 'Wait here'.
Hate Rating



RAIDEN

Game Metal Gear Solid 2 **Format** PS2

Despite what his defenders may say, Raiden is not the Luke Skywalker to Solid Snake's Han Solo. He's more like the prequels' rubbish Jedi kids to Snake's suave space pilot. Whiny, effeminate and overly emotional, this covert government agent would rather waste time chatting to his girlfriend than complete the trivial job of saving the President. Alright, so he might single-handily take down a terrorist cell and prevent a shady organisation from destroying the internet. But that still doesn't excuse his hours of moody moaning.

Hate Rating

CATALINA

Game GTA: San Andreas **Format** PS2

What. A. Bitch. In *Grand Theft Auto 3* our hysterical Hispanic sociopath is thankfully relegated to a bit (if still traitorous) part. Sadly for our sanity, her role is beefed up for San Andreas when she dates hero CJ for several missions – bank robberies and loads of beatings totally count as dating, right? A loud-mouthed, obsessive psycho, Catalina's not just unhinged; she's incredibly paranoid, too. And during the brief moments she's not introducing cops' shins to shotgun shells, our hateful anti-heroine loves to obsess over Carl's faithfulness... which usually involves her slapping him about.

Hate Rating

ZEKE

Game inFamous **Format** PS3

Hurray! Just what *inFamous* needs: a hefty dollop of useless, irritating sidekick. Not only is Zeke completely handless when it comes to helping Cole battle the forces of evil, but he's also a self-absorbed greedy so-and-so. Despite the fact Empire City is in ruins with thousands of people starving, Zeke has no problem constantly stuffing his bloated belly. Being greedy we can forgive, but screwing his best friend over because he's jealous of his superpowers? Yeah, not so much. An unfunny traitor who does nothing but get in the way, his redemption during the game's finale comes way too late to restore this idiot's risible reputation.

Hate Rating

10 Awesome discoveries in Just Cause 2

Andy Kelly

Try to hold off opening your parachute as long as possible

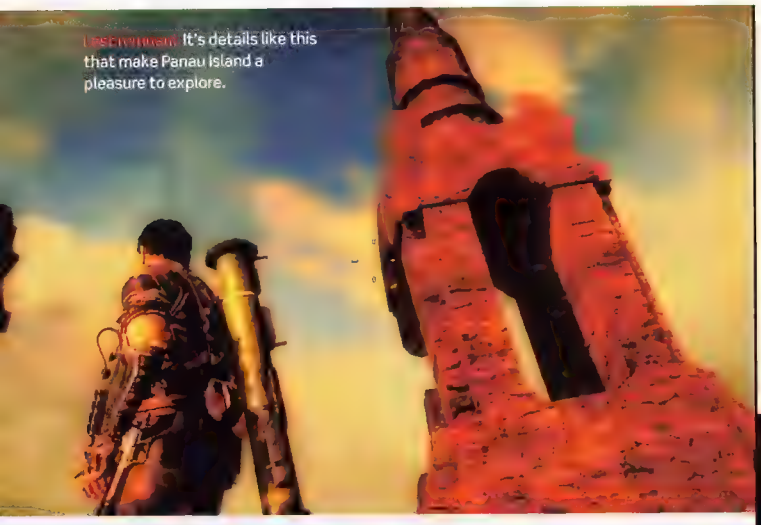
Pub Square Enix
Dev Avalanche Studios
FYI PS3 | 2010 | PSM126 80%
Panau Island is an incredible setting: a fanciful paradise of deserts, tropical jungles, towering skyscrapers and snow-capped mountains. It's absolutely brimming with stuff to do and see. To set the listed coordinates, access the map and look in the top left corner.

The longer you fall, the more Chaos points you'll receive

1 THE HIGHEST BASE JUMP

Head to the coordinates X:20528 Y: 11852 and you'll find yourself at the highest point of Panau Island: the snowy peak of a huge mountain. One of the game's hundred hidden Ular skulls is up here, but the real reason it's worth a visit is the thrill of jumping off the side into misty abyss below. And the view is quite something, too.

TEN THINGS


Lost in time It's details like this that make Panau island a pleasure to explore.

3 THE HIDDEN ENEMY BASE

Well, maybe 'hidden' isn't the right word. In true megalomaniacal dictator fashion, Pandak 'Baby' Panay has carved his face, and his predecessors', into the side of a mountain. A garish monument to his presidency. Flip a switch outside and his mouth slides down, revealing an opulent domed base filled with cherry blossom trees. The final mission takes place here, but you can visit any time – just head to the following coordinates: X: 30375 Y: 30637.

Face facts You only realise how big these faces are when you're standing beneath them.

2 THE ANCIENT RUINS

Head to X:3909 Y:25071 and you'll find a large area of dusty desert filled with the remains of some ancient, long-gone civilisation. At sunset it's remarkably beautiful, and a rare moment of calm in a game that's otherwise all about noise, distractions and explosions. There are similar ruins dotted all over Panau, but this is the biggest. Maybe the ancient Panauan capital city?

High flyer It has no weapons, but makes up for it with high speed and great handling.

5 THE RACE TRACK

At X:9170 Y:11413 you'll find this massive race track, complete with AI racers doing laps in vintage sports cars. Look around the pit area and you'll find some of the game's fastest motors parked under a series of tents. Regardless of the game's dodgy handling, it's still fun doing a few laps of your own. Then blowing the other racers up when you get bored.

Race for the prize You could make a very pretty racing game with this engine.

4 THE SECRET CHOPPER

In Panau City's skyscraper-filled financial district, at the coordinates X:5904 Y:13693, you'll find the tallest building in the game. Head to the roof – you can climb there with your grappling hook, or bail out of a plane or chopper – and you'll find this tiny helicopter parked on a helipad. It's one of the nimblest, fastest aircraft on the island, and perfect for taking an air tour of the city. And while you're up there, grapple to the top of the nearby antenna for a particularly terrifying base jump.

6 THE WHALE

There's a sliver of beach at X:29603 Y:31351 where you'll find the limp, rotting carcass of a beached whale. When you hover your crosshair over it, you'll notice it turns red, indicating it can be destroyed. And, yes, it can. Simply equip a rocket or grenade launcher, take aim and – from a safe distance – fire. The unfortunate animal will explode into a fountain of bone and blubber, revealing an armour upgrade box inside its cavernous rib cage. It's what he would have wanted.

Always on time It's already dead, so don't feel too bad about blowing it up.

Float on The balloon is super slow, so serves no real purpose other than sightseeing.

7 THE HOT AIR BALLOON

Bored of planes and choppers? Then get your ass to X:7397 Y: 16150 for a spot of vintage aviation. First, you have to shoot the weights off: look for the four sandbags attached to the basket. Then, when you get inside, press △ to ignite the burner and fill the balloon with hot air. You can control the direction of your drift by shifting your weight to each corner of the basket.

Stripped down There are a few upgrade and cash boxes up here too.

Ship shape Not the kind of thing you'd expect to find in the desert, eh?

8 THE MILE HIGH CLUB STRIP JOINT

Mark X:29584 Y:11435 on your map. This is the Mile High Club, a floating fortress of smut and suggestive dancing. Aboard you'll find gyrating girls (and guys), a miniature runway with attached private jet and an opportunity for an easy 'I Believe I Can Fly' Trophy (for base jumping 1000 metres). Grapple up to the top of the balloons and leap off. Simple. You can't shoot the place down, unfortunately.

9 THE MYSTERY TANKER

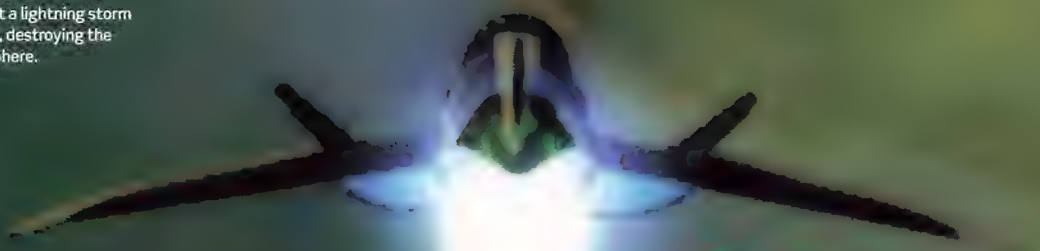
A mysterious shipwreck can be found at X:10437 Y:23499 – in the middle of the desert. This is likely a reference to Steven Spielberg's seminal science-fiction film Close Encounters of the Third Kind, where scientists find a similarly huge ship in the Mojave Desert. It could also be a reference to the Black Rock slave ship in Lost. Whatever the inspiration, it's another example of the game's incredible detail.

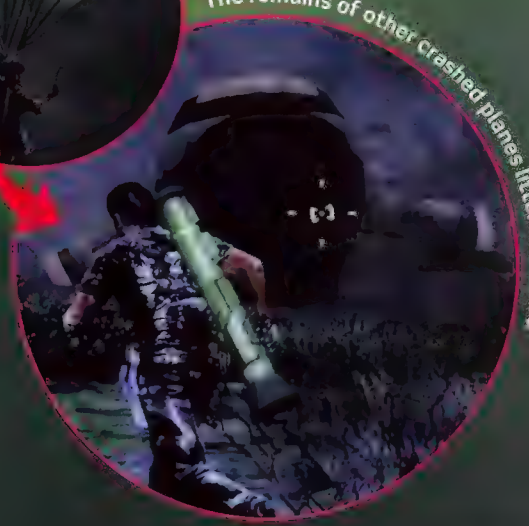
10 THE 'LOST' ISLAND

Head to X:1743 Y:4363 in a plane. You'll see an island in the distance, but as you begin your approach a violent thunderstorm will errupt. Then, no matter what aircraft you're in, you'll burst into flames and be forced to ditch. Explore the area and you'll find the wreckage of a passenger jet as well as a mysterious metal hatch. Hmmm, it's a bit like that TV show. You know, the one with the island. Neighbours. You'll also hear strange noises, which you later learn come from a secret World War 2 weapon of mass destruction.

On approach, it looks peaceful enough

But a lightning storm suddenly strikes, destroying the peaceful atmosphere.





The remains of other crashed planes litter the island

The ones we didn't pick...

Fake shark
There's a small lagoon at X:12665 Y:22595 where you'll notice a shark's fin poking out of the water, moving in circles. But when you dive beneath the water you'll notice it's actually just a motor with a fake fin attached. Weird.

Bubble gun
Look around X:4245 Y:25978 for a bell tower among some trees with white leaves. Climb up with your grappling hook and you'll find a 'special' weapon: a green plastic pistol that fires bubbles and does no damage. Not the most useful gun in the game.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks
psm3@futurenet.com

WALL OF SHOTS

25 retro revivals in Sega All-Stars Racing

Justin Towell

CLASSIC COOL Our favourite 25 references in Sega's racer

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.com

Pub Sega
Dev Sumo Digital
FYI PS3 | 2010 | PSM125 74%
Sonic and friends team up to take on *Mario Kart* at its own game. Using *OutRun 2006 Coast 2 Coast*'s familiar 'miles' approach to unlocking content, a simplified yet deep drifting mechanic and *Virtua Tennis*' mini-games, this is a a dream come true for Sega fanboys.

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing features an impressive 20 racers to unlock once you've saved up enough Sega Miles to buy them. We'll meet them all here, along with a few welcome cameos from classic Sega games. Just sit back and let the nostalgia wash over you.

Meet... Sonic

It's the main man, Sonic the Hedgehog. This spiny fella started life as 'Mr Needlemouse' in an internal competition to find a character who could replace Alex Kidd as Sega's mascot. Despite his fame, he still introduces himself before every race.

Meet... Alex Kidd

'Star' of 1986's *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*, strong-fisted Alex is completely devoid of charisma, yet he was Sega's mascot before Sonic. His likes are listed as Janken and rice balls. So that's Rock, Paper, Scissors and... rice. Balls.

Meet... Tails

Tails is most famous for his awful name. See, 'Tails' is a nick-name derived from the orange mutant's second tail. His real name is actually Miles Prower. Geddit? Miles Per Hour. We forgive him only because he's the least hateful of Sonic's friends.

Meet... Amy Rose

Amy's a pink hedgehog, because as we know, female versions of characters are either pink or have a bow. She's obsessed with Sonic who actually prefers human girls. At least Amy's got a cool hammer you can hit people with during her All-Star move.

Meet... Dr Eggman

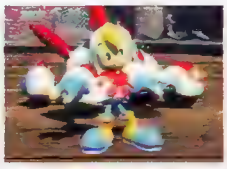
Since *Sonic Adventure* in 1999 this chap has been known as Dr Eggman. Before that, he was Dr Robotnik, which is infinitely better. Formerly Sonic's nemesis, these days Robotnik is a Bowser-style bosom buddy – they even play tennis together.

Meet... Shadow

Shadow first appeared in *Sonic Adventure 2*, though he was dead before the credits rolled. But then he was inexplicably alive again, turned gangsta and got a gun. His solo game flopped and now he's just another bit-part player. Cool voice, though.

Meet... AiAi

AiAi is the star of Sega's roll 'em up, *Super Monkey Ball*. He's cheerful, cheeky and has excellent taste in mini-games, as referenced in the Monkey Target track – one of the best in the game. If only he didn't hum so tunelessly and make odd noises.



Meet... Billy Hatcher

Hatcher was the star of one of the last great Sonic Team games. He's an average boy in a special Rooster Suit who specialises in rolling eggs to crush his enemies. After his GameCube debut, he appeared in *Sega Superstars* on EyeToy.

Meet... Amigo

Amigo is a Mexican monkey who plays the maracas. His first game, *Samba De Amigo* was one of the first Bemani games and used location-sensitive controllers before PS Move or the Wii. His psychedelic track is one of the best-looking in the game.

Meet... Big the Cat

There's a lot of hate for poor Big. His fishing sidequest in *Sonic Adventure* may have been dull and his voice is annoying, but he loves his friend, Froggy, and would do anything for him. One thing, mind – he looks nothing like a cat. Nothing.

Meet... Knuckles

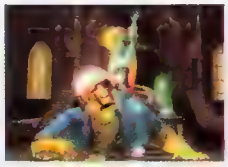
Knuckles was the third 'friend' to be added to Sonic canon after Tails and Amy. Like Shadow, he's also into hip-hop and raps: "I'm Knuckles / Unlike Sonic I don't chuckle" in *Sonic Adventure 2*'s soundtrack. We really wish he hadn't.

Meet... Ulala

Ulala holds the undisputed title of 'best legs in the galaxy'. Star of *Space Channel 5* and its sequel, she's sassy in an Austin Powers kind of way. It's also worth mentioning that she saved Michael Jackson from the evil Morolians. Twice.

Meet... Beat

While we would rather have played as Gum, anyone from Dreamcast's *Jet Set Radio* is welcome any day. So many games try to be cool and fail, yet *JSR* is impossibly cool. Beat has jet-powered roller blades and a stereo strapped to his car.



Meet... Zobiko

Zobiko and Zobio are from *House of the Dead EX*, where Zobio busts Zobiko out of jail. We're not sure her cuteness is convincingly conveyed in *All-Stars Racing*. Not that we have a thing for dead girls. Seriously though – we don't. That's now rumours start.

Meet... B.D. Joe

"Yeah! We gonna have some fun!" says B. D. Joe – and he's right. *Crazy Taxi*'s coolest cabbie returns in his yellow convertible and all is right with the world. He's even joined by a random customer when he goes All-Star and shares a high five with them.

Meet... Jacky Bryant

Jacky rides with his *Virtua Fighter* comrade, Akira Yuki. They originally appeared in 1993's *VF* when they looked like a collection of cereal boxes. Jacky's enthusiasm and relentless shouts of 'Yeah' fit in well with the remainder of the Sega crew.

Meet... Ryo Hazuki

Ryo Hazuki, star of the unforgettable *Shenmue* – the game that cost so much to make, everyone needed to buy it twice for it to turn a profit – gets his forklift truck back, which has had something of a speed increase since the 1999 classic.

Meet... The Chu Chus

The Chu Chus were the stars of the first ever online console game, *ChuChu Rocket*. We can still remember it arriving in the mail as a gift from Sega (those were the days). The space mice jump around on the back of their rocket during races.

Meet... The Bonanza Bros

These cylindrical dudes are animated to bobble up and down in a robotic kind of way (which never happened in the self-titled 90s game by the way). They're criminals who used to defeat enemies by opening doors on them.

Meet... Opa-Opa

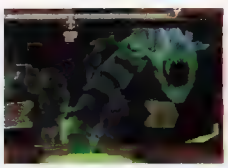
Opa-Opa is the flying ship from *Fantasy Zone* – a game that *looked* amazing on Sega Master System. It's the most expensive of all the characters in the in-game shop. It's a tad obscure, but looks surprisingly fitting after its 3D makeover.

Meet... NiGHTS

Can you believe *NiGHTS* wasn't even going to be in the game at one point? True, he wouldn't look right driving a car, so instead he's the flagman and also appears flying alongside you in Time Trial mode. Thankfully, his annoying voice has been omitted.

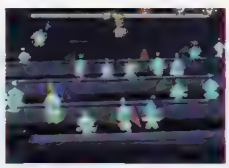
Meet... Froggy

Big the Cat's friend, Froggy, appears during the feline's All-Star move, bounding past the other racers while Big grips his tail. Froggy has always been a daft character, but this is so absurd, it passes *through* awful and back into awesome.



Meet... Tower

This snake-like boss is from *House of the Dead 2* and can be found in the Curien Mansion's Sewer Scrapes layout. It attacks the racers as they pass by slamming its head into the ground on the racing line. Hey - nobody said it was clever.



Meet... Chao

These little critters were like Tamagotchis that you could put in your Dreamcast's VMU and raise while you were away from the console, just like today's Pokewalkers. All they do here is wave their little flags. What a lovely bunch.

Meet... Kapu Kapu

This is the ChuChu's enemy – a big old space cat. During the ChuChu's All-Star move, he runs along the track, gobbling up the racers while one of the ChuChus stands proudly on his head. We just wish his old theme was given a reprise. Electro meows FTW.

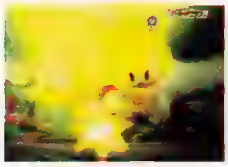
All Stars Racing FAQ

Q How do I drift properly?
A Continue to accelerate, turn in then hold ⓑ. For a tighter turn, release accelerate and continue to hold ⓑ. Simples.

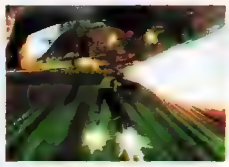
Q Do you get anything for doing tricks?
A Yes. If you land a trick properly, you get boost as well as extra Sega miles. Do three tricks and land the third to get maximum boost for your efforts.

Q Do you know where sailors hang out?
A Stop it – all that proves is that you got stuck trying to find the bar at the start of *Shenmue* and diverted attention from it with a lame joke.

ALTERED BEASTS The best All-Star moves in the game



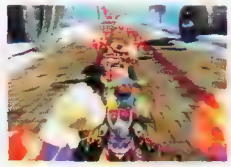
Use... Super Sonic
Sonic summons the power of the chaos emeralds and turns into Super Sonic. The sensation of unstoppable power is tangible, and you'll catch up with the pack in no time – just keep hammering ⊗ to retain the speed.



Use... Beat's spraypaint
Beat jumps out of his car and skates up the track (faster than ever – perhaps they should all have just had a running race?) and grabs a spray can to tag his foes with paint. We'd still love a *Jet Set Radio* remake.

Use... A hefty forklift
Ryo Hazuki's motorcycle is cool enough, but for his All-Star move he gets to ride in his famous forklift truck. We particularly like his death defying leap between the vehicles when you unleash the special move.

Use... Kung Fu Power
Akira springs from his car and punches it in the rear bumper with such force it sends Jacky flying to the front of the pack. The *VF* car is one the trickiest to master, so this All-Star comes in handy.



Use... Maracas
Amigo shakes his maracas with such Latin style, everybody in the vicinity gets locked in a conga line of maraca-shaking. Overcome by music, nobody can fire, let alone overtake, the devious little monkey.

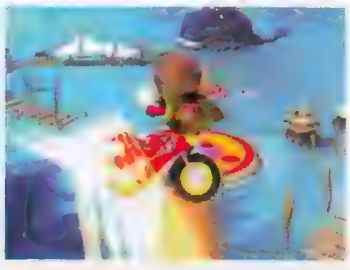
Use... Robo bombs
Dr Robotnik bombards the pack of racers ahead with explosive shells while he zooms past. There's something highly satisfying about playing the bad guy, especially when you top the podium.

STYLE POINTS The most impressive L2 stunts

HighFive Jacky and Akira do a neat High Five when they're flying through the air. To be honest, it's hard not to look cool when you high-five each other at 180mph in a flying sports car. Fair play to the chaps.

Tails' Barrel Roll Tails' plane is probably the hardest vehicle to control in the game, but at least this move makes up for it. With the coloured vortex behind him, this roll looks like a firework going off.

Big's Superman Air In a move straight out of *Pure*, Big holds onto the handlebars and lets his body rise above his bike. He gets so close to the camera, it's like he's busting out of the screen. Well, kind of.

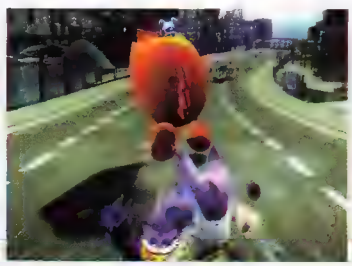


Alex Kidd's BMX spin Alex likes to pirouette on his bike, but the best move is one where he lets the bike rotate around underneath him, BMX-style, while he holds onto the handlebars. Bet you still hate him though.

SECRET TROPHIES Get yourself some hidden rewards...

Feel the magic Trigger All-Star mode playing as Amy and smack Sonic with your Pico-hammer. Hey, all's fair in love, war and novelty kart racing. And you can't really miss his big head and massively inflated ego...

Working Man Those cheeky upstarts Jacky and Akira have been giving it too much lip. Show them how they did Kung Fu in the 1980s by attacking them with Ryo's forklift truck. It's not conventional fighting style...

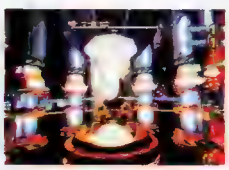


Cat Mania You may have noticed the hint about the ChuChus not liking a 'big cat'. So All-Star up and get Kapu Kapu to eat up Big. It's odd cat-cannibalism, but at least it yields a shiny Trophy.

Sonic Unleashed This one's easy – just turn into Super Sonic and make Robotnik your target for some old-school feud settling. One swift smack to his bald head and you're well on your way to a Platinum.

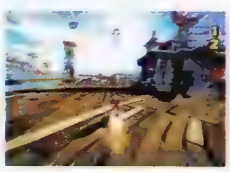
SAVE TIME The best shortcuts in the game

Speed through... Rokkaku Hill
As you head into the mall, keep tight after the right-hander then turn sharply after the last pillar and cut through the car park, staying to the left of the row of cars.



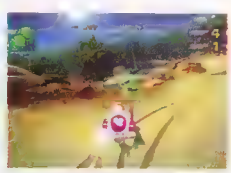
Speed through... Thunder Deck
About halfway round the lap, after the hairpin chicane (left, right) you hit an indoor section with a big glowing machine. Rather than pick left or right, boost across the middle ramp.

Speed through... Rampart Road
Near the end of the lap, you get to some left-handers through archways. Look for a boardwalk road off to the right of the track, through some left-facing arrows. A much quicker route.



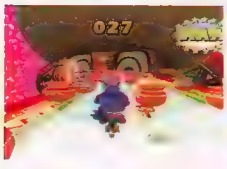
Speed through... Ocean Ruin
As you take a left onto the boardwalk, drift so you're charged for a boost as you reach the right hander. Don't head right – instead, dodge the fish and dash over the ramp ahead.

Speed through... Outer Forest
While the distance may not be *that* much shorter, taking a left through the trees near the end of the lap gives you enough elevation for a decent boost, and a safer route.

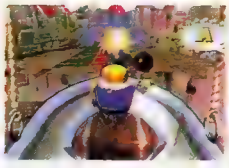


Speed through... Lost Palace
Try to jump across to this small island late on. Careful – you'll overshoot if you're boosting. Get it right and you'll not only skip the fishes but have time for a stage two trick boost.

BEST MISSIONS Try these old-school mini-missions



Try out... Fiesta Food Dodge
Someone's left cooking pots everywhere and Big has to dodge them all – which isn't easy when your butt is bigger than a car. Challenging, but satisfying when you pull it off.



Try out... Sky Pirate
This extended version of the Bonanza Brothers' All-Star move lets you rain down explosive terror on your rivals. The reload time is negligible so just spam the fire button throughout.

Try out... Hidden Ring Stash
The clue's in the name. You won't get AAA unless you find your way into the huge stash of rings near the end of the course. It's like Christmas when you get inside.

Try out... Monkey Trouble
This is the second hardest challenge in the game though you only have to pass through enough gates to reach grade A. Use your Start boost and air tricks wisely, and practice hard.

Try out... Haunted Hoedown
There's a massive zombie in the middle of the arena and you have to bring him down within the time limit. It's easy enough to do, but a single hit drops you down to AA.

Try out... Save the Day, Sonic
The final mission is (predictably) the hardest in the game, but by quite some way. Destroy the robot without taking a single hit and you can call yourself an All-Star. It took us an hour.

DEFINING MOMENT

Getting owned by a giant cactus in Final Fantasy XIII

Impossible odds

"He can destroy your party with one attack"

1 Dancing Queen

Power plant You'll find this jiving cactus grooving around the mountainous plateaus of Gran Pulse; specifically rocking around on the Easter Tors of the Archylte Steppe. His provocative dancing and blank facial expression angers Sazh, and the game's hardest battle begins.

2 Prickly foe

Pains and needles When he finally gets down to business, the Gigantuar is a huge pain in the ass. Chances are you won't even have the time to land one attack on him, before he cuts you down with his signature move: 10,000 Needles. That's right, 10,000 needles right in your face.

3 Harvest Season

Dead end This is embarrassing. You may be capable of downing demons that have a face full of teeth and razor sharp claws, but it took just one hit from an overgrown shrub with a disco addiction to fell your rock hard warriors. Bow down to the cactus lord, feeble mortal.

PlayStation's best kept secrets revealed every month

Easter egg › **Just Cause 2** › 4 8 15 16 23 42

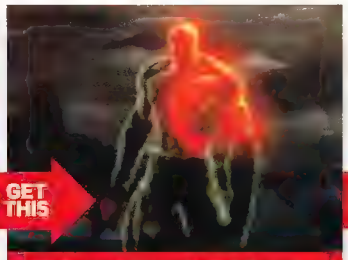
Take a plane to the island in the northwest corner of Panau and you'll suddenly crash.

So you're stranded on an island, why not head to the coordinates X:1743 Y:4363?

A mysterious hatch on a supposedly deserted island. Y'know, like Lost.

Bonus costume › **God of War III** › God of Wardrobe

Complete the game on any difficulty setting to unlock Fear Kratos.



With this costume you'll inflict 4x more damage, but so will your enemies.

Good luck finishing the game on this ultra-tough alternate setting.

Easter egg › **GTA: The Lost and Damned** › Party time. Excellent.

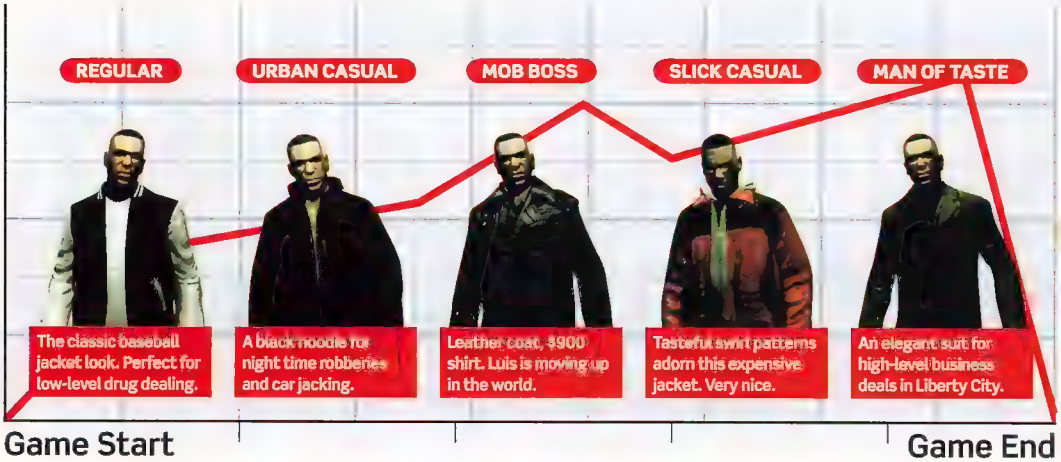
All over Liberty City you'll find these cars. It's called a Rhapsody.

They're a replica of the Mirthmobile in Wayne's World, without the flames.

There's even a picture of Wayne and Garth on the dashboard. Party on!

From zero to hero in... GTA: Gay Tony

The stylish streetwear of *Gay Tony*'s Luis Lopez


REGULAR
URBAN CASUAL
MOB BOSS
SLICK CASUAL
MAN OF TASTE
The classic baseball jacket look. Perfect for low-level drug dealing.
A black hoodie for night time robberies and car jacking.
Leather coat, $900 shirt. Luis is moving up in the world.
Tasteful swirl patterns adorn this expensive jacket. Very nice.
An elegant suit for high-level business deals in Liberty City.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

Cheats you *must* know

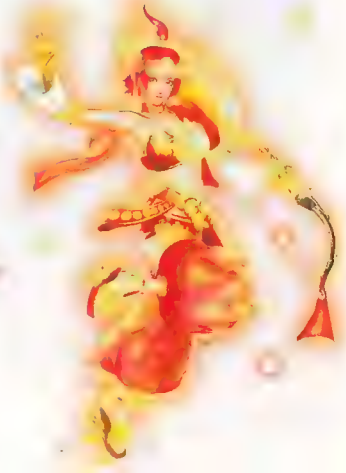
1 Just Cause 2
Bubble gun
Go to the coordinates X:4249, Y:25990 to find a bubble gun. Fun.

2 MX vs. ATV Reflex
All ATVs
Enter COUCHES as a code in the cheat menu to unlock all ATVs.

3 Guitar Hero: Van Halen
Invisible Rocker
In the cheats menu enter Green, Red, Yellow, Yellow, Yellow, Blue, Blue, Green to unlock invisible rockers.

4 Resonance of Fate
8-bit costume
In Ch.7 select Leanne and look in her wardrobe. Enter ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, →, ←, →, Ⓐ, ◎.

5 Dynasty Warriors Strikeforce
Bonus characters
Complete the Yellow Turban Rebellion mission on five star difficulty to unlock Zhang Jiao.



Exploring the cold majesty of Vagrant Story

Tom Sykes

Pub Square
Dev Square
FYI PSone | 2000
There was only one *Vagrant Story* but its world, Ivalice, has been seen in other titles – it's home to the *Final Fantasy Tactics* games, and it was also (loosely) the setting for *Final Fantasy XII*. You can now pick up *Vagrant Story* on PSN to play on your PS3 and PSP

Even at the time, there was something audacious about *Vagrant Story*'s lack of voiced dialogue. In this, and many other ways, the game was behind the times – a holdover from Square's mute empire of epic role-playing games. But if this did mark the end of an unspoken era, then what a Hell of a way to go out.

Vagrant Story is densely and beautifully written – poetic and adult in its approach, where most of its peers seemed to be written by surly schoolboys with a fetish for oversized swords. And, in contrast to pretty much every Square game before it, it features an uncommonly excellent translation, with no garbled spelling errors and not a single spoony bard in sight. To hear it spoken aloud would be a tragedy. When we said it was dense, well, we meant it. Here's the abridged version: you're Ashley Riot, a reticent Riskbreaker (think Medieval secret agent) tasked with scouring the ancient city of Lea Monde for a pale, bony sorcerer named Sydney Losstarot. Along the way you'll meet people called things like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and uncover dark psychological truths about your past. The story can be difficult to follow, particularly if you've grown accustomed to the burning hometowns and evil empires of the stereotypical Japanese role-playing game, but despite the obvious care that's gone into developing such a rich set of characters, they're secondary to the city of Lea Monde itself.

There's an atmosphere to the medieval Europe-inspired city that Square haven't been able to match since. It's gloomy, austere and beautiful, with a sense of claustrophobia in-keeping with the unforgiving nature of the game's combat. It can be difficult to appreciate after a decade of technological advance, but Lea Monde is one of the best-realised game settings we've ever seen.

And the visuals play a very small part in this – it's the sound design that truly brings the (mostly) empty city to life. Vagrant Story saves its bombastic music for boss battles, with exploration defined by an absence of sound more than anything else. The chink of a soldier's chainmail, the crunch of bones under your feet, even the movement of the cursor on the menu screen, all carry a heavy echo that reverberates bodily around the room. For much of the time there is no music, just a shuddering vibration that manages to establish the scale of your location and the oppression of your situation far better than merely showing it ever could.

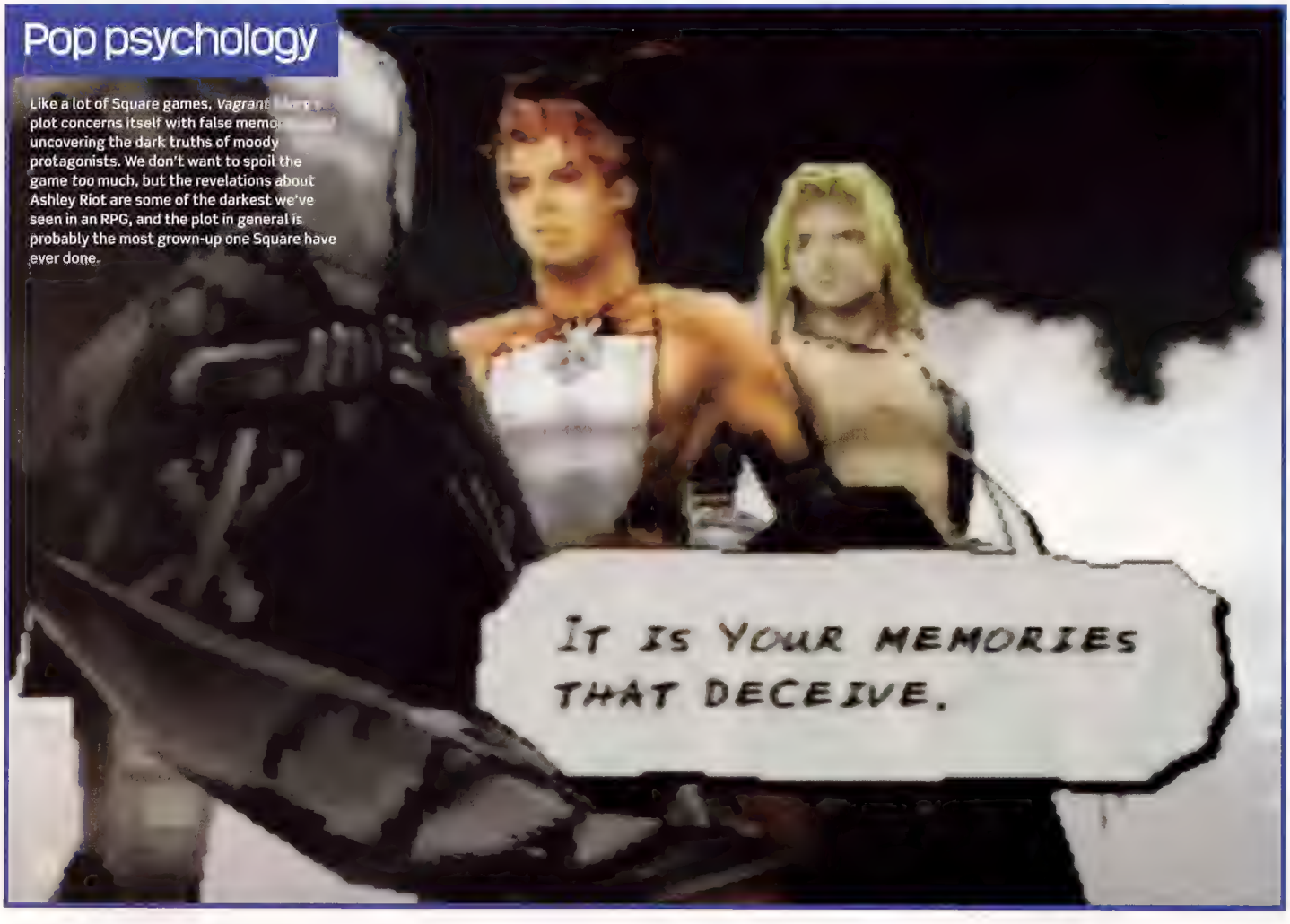
Risky business

Of course, this is not a game where you simply wander around a medieval city gawping at architecture – though, if

The defining moment...

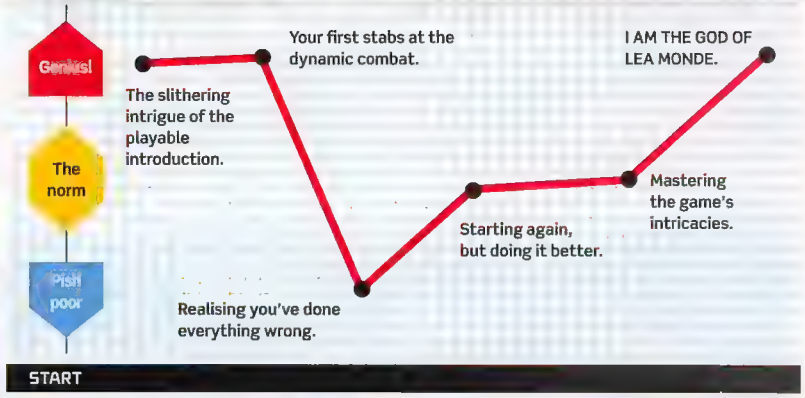
Pop psychology

Like a lot of Square games, *Vagrant* [illegible] plot concerns itself with false memo[illegible] uncovering the dark truths of moody protagonists. We don't want to spoil the game *too* much, but the revelations about Ashley Riot are some of the darkest we've seen in an RPG, and the plot in general is probably the most grown-up one Square have ever done.

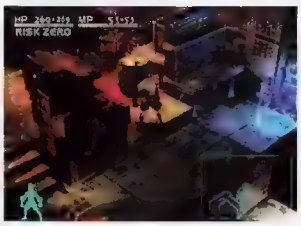


Nay, verily the writing is exquisite, and oddly Shakespearean, but thankfully we never had any trouble reading it.

The *Vagrant Story* thrill-o-graph


Genius!
The norm
Pish poor
The slithering intrigue of the playable introduction.
Your first stabs at the dynamic combat.
Realising you've done everything wrong.
Starting again, but doing it better.
Mastering the game's intricacies.
I AM THE GOD OF LEA MONDE.
START

Chains of love Getting the hang of chain attacks can be incredibly tricky.



one did exist, we'd probably snap it up immediately – you also get to hit slimes with swords. Appearing during a golden age of sorts for the J-RPG, when every new game (even in established franchises like *Final Fantasy*) was a bold attempt at reinvention, *Vagrant Story* offered the most succinct and successful combination of real-time and turn-based combat yet. You can attack as often as you like, but it's a slow and heavy process; battle speed is helped by your ability to 'chain' attacks together – by hitting a face button just as Ashley lands a blow – thereby extending your combo to a potentially limitless number. There are a number of different chain and defence attacks, as well as magic, Break Arts (unique weapon spells), and the ability to muck about with your weapons at handy workshops located throughout the city. For a neophyte player, it can be really quite difficult to take it all in. Many RPGs treat fighting as an afterthought, but combat here is immeasurably deep, and unquestionably the focus.

Naturally, the game doesn't tell you how deep, and the only way we discovered for ourselves was by making grave mistakes with our equipment, and having to start over. *Vagrant Story* is not a game that throws you in the deep end and chuckles as you paddle towards a shark. Weapons build affinities to certain classes of enemies, and the only way to defeat future bosses is to empower your weapons from the start. Use one weapon throughout the game and you're screwed; keep a separate one for each enemy class and you'll be fine. It's an unfair system, but the lack of any sort of hand-holding is gratifying in this day and age. It can seem like *Vagrant Story* doesn't want to be played, just as Lea Monde doesn't want to be explored, but there's such joy in mastering its complexities and taming its oppressive passageways that you can forgive the game for being a little standoffish.

CLASSIC VERDICT

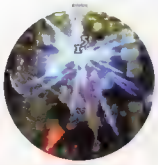
Why now? It's on PSN, and if enough of you buy it that might convince Square to make another one.
Final thought Deep, dark and complex, but still one hell of a rewarding game. Easily worth £4.79.

The Top 5

VS tips

1 Groundwork
The game doesn't do a lot to ease you into its complex systems, so make the most of the exhaustive tutorial on the menu screen.

2 Blunt steel
We can recommend avoiding the weapon assembly system, at least to start with, as it's possible to completely reduce your weapons' effectiveness.



3 Personal defence
Don't rely on one weapon. Pick a different one for each enemy type.

4 Grindhouse
Don't run away. Weapons build affinities over time – if you don't beef them up by battling regular enemies, you might end up doing zero damage during boss fights and have to restart.

5 The time is right
The quickest way to take down enemies is by using chain attacks. Get the timing down for each of your weapons, and you'll do fine.

Want to play with other PSM3 readers? Go to www.psm3mag.co.uk

HIGHLIGHTS

Liberty City smashed
Red Dead online details
Home's mini-games explored

The BIG review

Drive-by There's some original modes in *Episodes* – make the most of them.

GTA IV Episodes is now at large and online

But the villains here are controlled by humans

We're seriously torn here. On the one hand, *Episodes From Liberty City* is packed full of superb modes and toys to play with online, and the potential for timeless fun is enormous. On the other, most folk playing it are only interested in deathmatches. The combination of the two means you're almost certainly going to be frustrated while you wait in lobbies for adventurous or like-minded people to join you. Argh.

The other modes are ace, though, as you'll see on the opposite page. For example, you can hunt a biker through the streets as you pilot a helicopter in Chopper vs Chopper. Or simply enter Free Play – a mode that gives you the city to do what you like – and go base-jumping together.

It's worth playing it online just to sample the delights on offer. You'll inevitably find kindred spirits to play with and, when you do, you'll have a blast. So here's our request: open your mind to a seriously exciting online experience. **Nathan Irvine**

Visit the Rockstar online hub at http://socialclub.rockstargames.com

Info-burst

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar North
Players 1-16
FYI PSM126 | 88%
Modes Deathmatch | Witness Protection | Free Play | Chopper vs Chopper | loads more
The 360 'exclusive' episodic content finally makes its way onto PS3. *The Lost and Damned* sees a super-gritty side of Liberty City with Johnny and the biker gang but *Ballad of Gay Tony* lightens the mood with a disco-fused story.

Base jumping with friends is amazing – you owe yourself this kind of fun.

Which new modes are worth playing?

The Lost And Damned
Lone Wolf Biker | 1-16 players

What? One player starts as the target biker and the rest have to hunt them down and kill them. Whoever finishes the target then gets hunted.

How do I win? Pass through checkpoints as the hunted player. Whoever has been through the most at the end is victorious.

Is it any good? Yes. The intensity of knowing that seven hungry bikers are baying for your blood as you twist through Liberty City's alleyways is a thrill ride from start to finish.

The Lost And Damned
Chopper vs Chopper | 2 players

What? One guy rides a bike while the other flies a helicopter with the sole purpose of killing them with minigun fire. After the biker dies, the roles are reversed.

How do I win? Pass through checkpoints as the biker.

Is it any good? At first, no. This is mainly due to the incredibly tricky controls of the helicopter. Thankfully, it doesn't blow up when you hit a tree or the like, but it's super-twitchy all the same.

The Lost And Damned
Club Business | 1-8 players

What? As a team of Lost bikers, you're given missions on the fly to complete by Angus, one of the crew's honchos.

How do I win? You don't personally win, but as a team you can accrue loads of points and cash for character upgrades. Missions include escorting VIPs, destroying other bikes and killing off your rivals.

Is it any good? Yes, but it can hinge on who you're playing with. If some douche is fannying about for ages, then your enjoyment will suffer.

Ballad Of Gay Tony
Free Play | 1-16 players

What? Liberty City is yours to dick about in. There are no rules, no time limits – just all out fun.

How do I win? You don't, but in a way being able to make up new games (we tried playing a game of 'tag' with a few people, which had hilarious results) is always a winner.

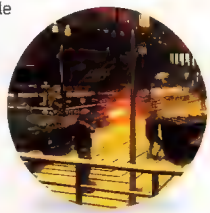
Is it any good? Absolutely. With the inclusion of sticky bombs, parachutes and other souped-up weapons, you could have hours of fun if you find the right crowd to play with.

The Lost And Damned
Own The City | 1-16

What? It's a turf war. Head to the locations on the map and you'll take over the territory, leaving AI thugs to protect your new acquisition – albeit badly – while you scoot off to the next one.

How do I win? Take over the most territory with your team. Always go for the empty slots before tackling the occupied ones.

Is it any good? It's not bad. We wish the AI goons would level up the longer they were stationed in the zones, but apart from that it's pretty frenetic fun.



The Lost And Damned
Witness Protection | 1-16

What? It's the N.O.O.S.E (read: SWAT) vs The Lost as the law men have to move witnesses to safe houses across the city. Guess what the Lost want to do with the witnesses instead...

How do I win? Either destroy the convoy with the Lost faction or deliver the witnesses safely as the N.O.O.S.E patrol. Simple. At least in principle

Is it any good? It's probably our favourite of the team games. Well worth sinking time into.

Online Thrill-o-meter

At liberty
Brilliant, Liberty City is mine to piss about in online!
World alight
Ahhh, that perfect sticky bomb lob took care of that car full enemies.
Killin' time
Friends? Check. Helicopters? Check. A proper dust up in Star Junction? Check. This is gonna be messy.
Massacred
Man, I'm playing against God-damn Terminators here. Boo! Hiss.
Repetition
Come on now, why's everybody playing the same mode over and over again?
Thrills
Time

3 things you need to know NOW

Getting an edge in the hard world of the big city

1

Most people play deathmatch

We've already mentioned this, but it does mean you'll have your arse handed to you at first. Stick with it to start winning.

2

Find a car ASAP

Most Lost And Damned missions start off on two wheels. Use a car for increased armour and stability. A fast one if possible.

3

BOOM! Headshot!

It's pretty difficult to kill an opponent with standard weapons like Vice on foot and at the same time hit the right stick up for a headshot.

Q&A

What is it like for beginners?

A bit of a grind, in all fairness. The problem is that because most people play deathmatch, and your natural inclination will be to join the populated lobbies first, the folk in there know where all the best weapons are.

Are there any technical problems?

Sometimes when you're chasing another car that's off in the distance the frame-rate can suffer and make it difficult for you to spot where they just drove off too.

Anything else I should know?

It gets better. The initial sadness is replaced with joy when you get the right crowd in your lobby and start playing more adventurous game types.

PSM3's Top Online Games

25 of the best games to play online

FIRST PERSON SHOOTER

1 **Battlefield BC2**
The most intricate and varied warzone on PS3. This multi-player sandbox is a joy to visit with a squad of friends.
Rating 87% - Issue 124

2 Modern Warfare 2
3 Killzone 2
4 Call Of Duty: World At War
5 Borderlands

ACTION / ADVENTURE

1 **Uncharted 2**
Looks stunning, and the climbing mechanics – in versus play and co-op – lend a fresh feel. More accessible than *MW2*.
Rating 95% - Issue 124

2 GTA IV
3 Warhawk
4 Army Of Two: The 40th Day
5 LittleBigPlanet

SPORT

1 **FIFA 10**
Fuss-free, highly playable and no major lag issues. 10 vs 10, and Be A Pro are highlights. *PES 2010* is more tactical, arguably.
Rating 90% - Issue 119

2 Madden NFL 10
3 PES 2010
4 Virtua Tennis 2009
5 NBA 2K10

RACER

1 **Colin McRae DiRT 2**
Brilliant, lag-free online racing with an online career mode that feeds into your main profile. The King – until *GRID 2*...
Rating 88% - Issue 118

2 Burnout Paradise
3 Race Driver GRID
4 WipEout HD
5 NFS: Shift

BEAT 'EM UP

1 **Super Street Fighter IV**
The best fighting game ever, now with improved online options.
Rating 85% - Issue 119

2 Soulcalibur IV
3 UFC 2009
4 Tekken 6
5 Super Street Fighter HD Remix

Don't agree? Let us know on the forums

More Reviews

We rate the rest of this month's online games

Chop and change **You can get involved with the racing, or spectate if you're less competitive.**

Info-burst

Pub **Capcom**
Dev **Milestone**
Players **20**
FYI **PSM125 | 84%**
The best *MotoGP* to date features an extensive career, licenses, and some smart online options, including races for up to 20 players at once. Capcom has also promised free updates throughout the GP season.

MotoGP 09/10

REVIEW Take part in epic 20 player races, if you wait long enough

What is it like for beginners?
Chances are, if you own this game, you appreciate biking – so there are few 'beginners' per se. Races are competitive, but good-natured.
What's the community like?
Headsets are, as always, a scarce commodity, but the few people we did manage to chat with were passionate about the sport, not about questioning our sexuality.
Are there any technical problems?
Early updates fixed the stability of races, so most run smoothly. Even if you get into a full 20-player race, which doesn't happen too often (shame, because massive races with 19 other players are a genuine delight), there's little lag to contend with.
Anything else I should know?
It's not all about the competitive racing here. If you just want to sit back and watch others race, there's a Spectator mode that lets you do that. It's great if you frequently find yourself last in races but still want a piece of the community. There are competitive leaderboards too. **Andy Hartup**

BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger

REVIEW A solid alternative to *Street Fighter IV* online

Info-burst

Pub **Zen United**
Dev **Arc System Works**
Players **1-6**
FYI **PSM123 | 85%**
Blazblue is the best fighting game on PS3 without 'Street Fighter' in the title and the old-school brawler everyone who loved *Street Fighter* should get next. Its anime sensibilities may grate, though.

What is it like for beginners?
Like any fighting game, it's the first step that's the hardest to take, especially when the nine-month wait for a European release means Americans have a colossal head start.
What's the community like?
Curiously friendly, and six-man lobbies mean you can see how better players play your character. All the tools are there to ease you in once you've taken the first step of getting semi-not-rubbish with one character.
Are there any technical problems?
Blazblue dishes up six-man lobbies, winner-stays-on arcade match ups, full replays for everyone, and a server browser loaded with details about game type and connection. You know if a game will be laggy before you join it.
Anything else I should know?
Had *Blazblue* been released on time, it would have been a 50,000 volt jump start to the genre, but the delay has thrown it in the path of the *Super Street Fighter IV* train. **Mike Gapper**

Blue in the face **It's great, but prepare to get trounced by US players who got this ages ago.**

Network News

Beta trials, dev Q&As... the future of online now

The BIG story

Red Dead Redemption takes traditional multi-player West

Horsing about online is fun and genuinely innovative

Red Dead Redemption has already intrigued us with its new *GTA*-style open-world riff on the 1900s Wild West, and now the multi-player element is proving to be interesting too.

Red Dead's multi-player modes come in five flavours – the Free Roaming mode gives you the run of the entire map, from the cactus-filled plains and deserts of Mexico up to the technologically advanced town of Blackwood. It's a kind of lobby that lets you fight against the AI, each other, or form into posses and fight in more organised ways.

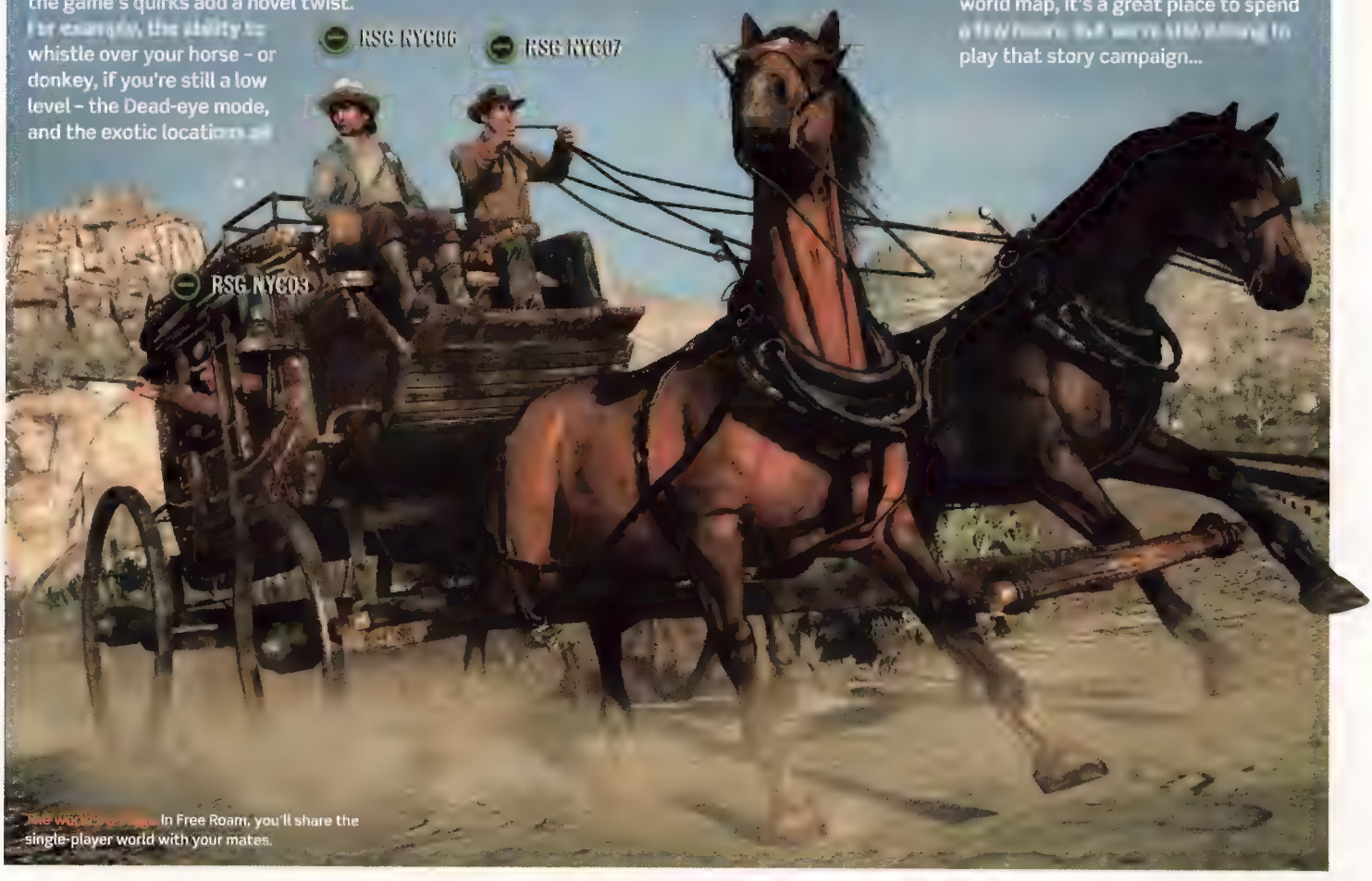
Red Dead also offers four standard competitive modes, but the game's quirks add a novel twist. For example, the ability to whistle over your horse – or donkey, if you're still a low level – the Dead-eye mode, and the exotic locations all lend *Red Dead* a unique feel.

For instance, we saw *Red Dead*'s version of Capture the Flag – Hold Your Own – in Diez Coronas. It's a vast bowl with a town at either end, while a cannon and a gatling gun on either side of a single tower of rock dominate the centre. With nothing but shrubs to conceal you, it's no typical CTF map, but it suits a variety of play styles. Sniping, brash horse-led attacks, stealthy shrub-hugging – it's a refreshing take on a worn theme.

The other notable mode is Gold Rush, which we saw set in the Mexican-esque town of Chuparosa. Collecting bags of gold and dropping them in the chests requires a balance of stealth (you don't appear on the mini-map when crawling) and knowing when to bolt for it. Or you could just wait by the chest, and steal others' gold after they've done the hard work.

With these and two deathmatch modes taking place on locations in the world map, it's a great place to spend a few hours that weren't GTA-filled to play that story campaign...

Your faithful horse will be on hand for the multi-player modes too.



In Free Roam, you'll share the single-player world with your mates.

Now Playing

The games we're loving right now

Recon-ditioned expectations **Don't let campers go unpunished – take the fight to them.**

"Have it!" I may have screamed over my headset to no-one

Andy H explains how he scored a victory against a team of dirty snipers in *Battlefield BC2*

There's a subtle difference between a sniper and a camper in *Battlefield Bad Company 2*. Snipers are handy, long-range tools, who can be put to good use supporting an assault or as early defence while your team is defending an objective. Campers are just tools. They're the guys that gather in packs on a ridge and, unmoving, desperately try to whittle down the defending team's infinite respawns (duh) as their team-mates struggle to assault M-COM stations. We hate campers.

Play the game for long enough, though, and you'll find yourself in a match with or against a cluster of campers. As an attacker on a team full of these guys, don't expect any useful support – they're in it for the personal glory. As a defender, an attacking team of campers can make your life a misery, constantly squatting behind trees and pounding your M-COM stations with their cheap mortar strikes. We found ourselves in one such game earlier in the month; facing team of seven or eight recons (out of a total of 12 players) on the wide-open Arica Harbor map. After the first phase had ended – a sorry five minutes of relentless sniper death – half our squad quit in frustration leaving myself and another man to stick it out. No point wasting all that XP after all.

Picture It

The second pair of M-COM stations in the town fell, after repeated mortar strikes and endless, cowardly kills. Morale was low, and we were running out of fall-backs. At the top of the bridge we held on, but with less than ten spawns left, our attackers fumbled the second objective. Their ill-gained victory was sending a message that spamming the recon class is an acceptable way of winning. It isn't.

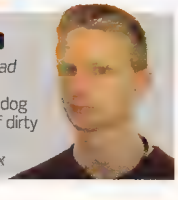
We decided to make our final stand at the bottom of the bridge. We brought in counter-snipers to pick off their campers, and hid in their favourite spots with an angry knife, ready to snag their dog-tags should they even dream of approaching. Objective B fell. We pushed harder, and desperately clung on to A, finally – euphorically – picking off their last few spawns as they half-heartedly rushed into our net of death. "Have it!" I may have screamed over my headset to no-one in particular. It was a victory for justice, fair play, and virtual manliness over online cowardice.

Andy Hartup

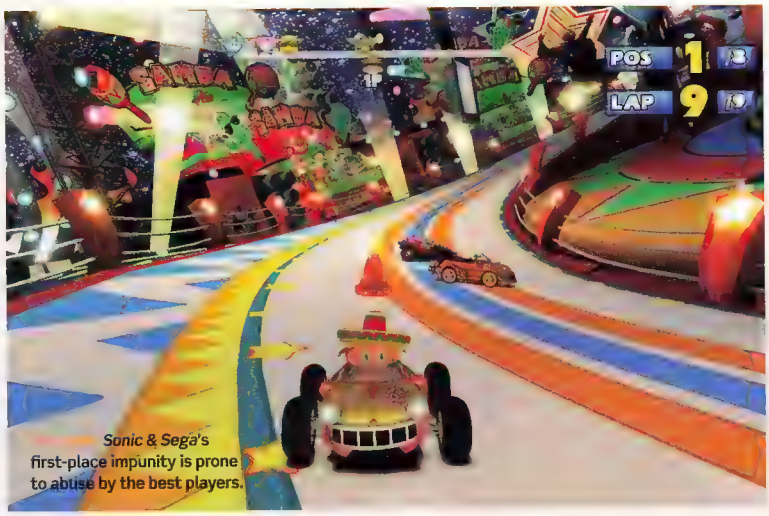
Now Playing *Battlefield Bad Company 2*

This month Collected the dog tags of a team made up of dirty camping snipers.

Also Playing *Sam and Max*



Picture It



Sonic & Sega's first-place impunity is prone to abuse by the best players.

"He tumbled back into the snarling pack, who devoured him"

Justin Towell emerges triumphant in a war of wits

Second place is by far the worst place to be in *Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing*. You've got six players' catch-up items to contend with, plus anything the leader throws back at you. The leader, meanwhile, has a clear track ahead and the items rarely make it as far as him. So all he has to do is maintain his lead.

So having mastered single-player, I was out in front and winning by 15 seconds every time online. But then I got into a game with what sounded like Little Lord Fauntleroy's whinier sibling. "Will you stop annoying me?" he grizzled. He then started trying to trash talk by calling everyone 'midget bastards' or something similar. I quit out – it was too weird. And that's when I met my match.

One guy was hosting a game and playing as Sonic. And he was good. So good, in fact, he marked my first loss online. OK, fair enough – I was caught up in the pack. 'Next time!' and all that. But again, as the race started, he zoomed into first and away for the rest of the five-lap race.

And that's when I realised his game. Being the host, he was setting it to a five-lap race so that he had enough time to build his lead to the point where all the other racers would be unable to beat the end of race timer. He wanted to see 'DNF' all down the board. Well, not on my watch.

Race after race, I was getting caught up in the pack while my nemesis sped away into the distance. "You don't know what you're doing!" I found myself yelling at the TV. "He's getting away again and you're shooting me!? Gaah!" The rest of the players were fighting amongst themselves, oblivious to our common oppressor and his machinations.

We must have played ten five-lap races each with the same pattern before I managed to sneak a rocket through on the Samba Carnival track. To my utter elation, he tumbled back into the snarling pack, who devoured him with rockets, rainbows and bombs. It was absolute carnage, and it was beautiful.

I won the race easily and noted the 12-second time gap. That's when I became the childish one. I cackled with maniacal glee and switched off the PS3.

You're only as good as your last race, mate.

Justin Towell
Now Playing *Sonic & Sega All-star Racing.*
This month Defeated a child after losing over ten times.
Also Playing *Sonic the Hedgehog, Sonic 2.*

The Best Stuff on the Store

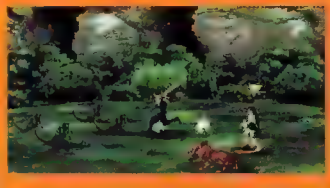
PSN must-buys

BEST MOVIES
1. Star Trek
2. Dark Knight
3. Public Enemies
4. The Godfather
5. Borat

BEST DEMOS
1. Metal Gear Solid 4
2. Batman AA
3. Battlefield BC2
4. Gran Turismo
5. Heavy Rain

BEST VIDZONE MUSIC
1. Foo Fighters – The Pretender
2. Johnny Cash – Hurt
3. Beyonce – Single Ladies
4. Kings of Leon – Sex on Fire
5. Eric Prydz – Call on Me

BEST PSN GAMES
1. Braid
2. Warhawk
3. WipEout HD Fury
4. Battlefield 1943
5. Pixeljunk Shooter



BEST PSONE CLASSICS
1. Final Fantasy VII
2. Metal Gear Solid
3. Syndicate Wars
4. Syphon Filter
5. Street Fighter Alpha

DLC Update

The latest downloadable content to hit PSN

DLC of the month

Modern Warfare 2 gets stimulated

This five-map package may be expensive for what it is, but if you're a hardcore *MW2* player, you'll more than get your money's worth. Storm, a warehouse area being lashed by the elements, is the pick of the new stages. Everything about it feels dramatic, and it's an excellent arena for objective-based modes like Sabotage. In contrast, Bailout provides a splash of colour, although in a typically run-down way (what else did you expect from a *MW* map?). Its tight spaces and sniping spots make it ideal for Free For All and Team Deathmatch.

The last of the new maps is Salvage, an abandoned construction site. Not the most inspired of layouts, since there are few places to hide from those with quicker trigger-fingers. Expect to die plenty here. Finally, two fan-favourites from the first *Modern Warfare*, Overgrown and Crash, join the party. We expected something a little more creative from the first batch of DLC for the biggest game of this generation, but for now Stimulus Pack adds much needed online variety.

War-torn vistas While not stunning value, the five new maps are worth it for *MW* fans.

Download queue

Game-boosting extras you can download right now

1 Battlefield BC2

Download Map Pack **Cost** Free

This free update adds Laguna Presa as a Rush map, which is lengthy and full of jungle, and Arica Harbor as a Conquest map. Both are welcome additions.

2 Army Of Two TFD

Download Chapters of Deceit **Cost** £6.29

This brings another couple of levels, which aren't as smartly designed as the ones you'll find in the main game. We recommend you spend your money elsewhere.

3 Heavy Rain

Download The Taxidermist **Cost** £3.19

Adds an extra chapter where you play as Madison investigating a creepy taxidermist. A welcome distraction if you love *Heavy Rain*, and cheap to boot.

Game on *Lunar Leap* isn't bad, but it's hardly fulfilling either.

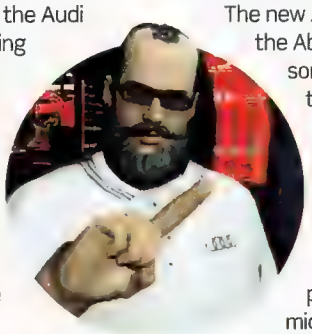
This month Home mini-games on test. Do they add anything of worth?

No place like Home

Raw reports from Sony's life sim

You've killed every pigeon in Liberty City and seen every *Heavy Rain* ending – now what? You've run out of games. Maybe *Home*'s mini-games can tide you over?

Let's kick things off in the Audi *Home* Terminal, with racing mini-game *Audi Vertical Run*. We start a new game and spawn in an Audi concept car on a twisting track in a futuristic city. Imagine *WipEout*, but with the controls of a Scalextric set. Someone blasts our car with a lightning bolt and we sort of float away from the track. Then we quit. Stick to making cars, Audi.



Leap of faith

Next up, the new Game Moonbase, which imagines a future where retail chain Game have colonised Earth's moon, and turned it into a garish advertising plaza full of mute automatons. Their game is *Lunar Leap*, which is actually quite addictive. You have to leap between platforms in low gravity, adjusting the power and speed of each jump. But ten minutes later, we've had enough. Longevity seems to be an issue with these *Home* games.

The new *Assassin's Creed* space, the Abstergo Lab, offers something a bit meatier in the form of a historically themed tower defence game. Soldiers rush a castle, and you have to fend them off with strategically placed arrow-firing towers. But people keep quitting mid-game. At the excitingly named Abandoned Docks of Empire City we play *Reaper Shock*, which is a fairly generic *inFAMOUS*-themed shooting gallery.

"Why are you playing this instead of a proper game?" we ask Yuixx, who's playing *Reaper Shock* alongside us. "Dunno. Bored," he said. Man, he must be *really* bored. Things are looking grim. We try *Tank Trainer* in the Sodium Hub, which is a 3D shooter. It's more accomplished than most Home games, but they want *money* for the full thing. No, thanks. *Red Bull Air Race* is a simplistic flight sim, and the *Hustle Kings Ball Dodge Challenge* in the Events space sees you on a giant pool table avoiding rolling balls.

So, in summary, *Home*'s mini-games are, well, almost exclusively rubbish. And limited. And shoddy. So if you really need something to play between games, download a few demos from the PS Store instead. Or just idly flick back and forth through the XMB. Sorry.

Home Q&A

Q. What is Home?
A. A virtual world that you can access from your XMB. It's filled with other PS3 users, represented as 3D avatars, that you can interact with. Like a chatroom, but in three dimensions.

Q. How do I get started?
A. It's free. Well, the basics are. To get the best 'spaces' (levels, basically) and the coolest clothes/costumes for your avatar, you'll need to spend real money through the Store.

Q. What is there to do?
A. Besides chatting and dancing, there are a load of mini-games and arcade machines to play on. Some are great, some are rubbish, and many come with cosmetic rewards for your avatar.

Andy Kelly is PSM3's Features Editor. For more shots of this month's quest, visit tinyurl.com/psm3flickr

Just awful **Audi's marketing piece, sorry racer, has all the steering precision of a supermarket trolly.**

PSM3 Presents

The Archive

Every PS3 game rated plus what to buy next

TOP 3 PS3 ADVENTURES

01 **Grand Theft Auto IV**

02 **Uncharted 2: Among Thieves**

03 **Metal Gear Solid 4**

PSM3 WILDCARDS

Lost Planet
Flawed, but entertaining, snowy action shooter.

The Saboteur
Some clever ideas in this open world WW2 game.

TOP 3 PS3 SHOOTERS

01 **Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2**

02 **BioShock 2**

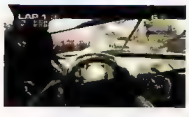
03 **The Orange Box**

PSM3 WILDCARDS

Legendary: The Box
Mythical beasties invade NYC. Clunky, but fun.

Clive Barker's Jericho
Horror shooter packed full of disgusting beasts.

TOP 3 PS3 RACERS



01 **Race Driver: GRID**

02 **Colin McRae: DiRT 2**

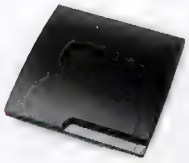
03 **Burnout Paradise**

PSM3 WILDCARDS

Ferrari Challenge
Polished sim with emphasis on realism.

Sega All-Stars Racing
A colourful, Sega-flavoured *Mario Kart*.

PS3 A-Z Listing



Game	Issue	Score
50 Cent: Blood on the Sand	112	75%
AC/DC Live: Rock Band	110	41%
Afrika	110	71%
Afro Samurai	112	64%
Aliens vs. Predator	125	57%
All Pro Football 2K8	94	74%
Alone in the Dark: Inferno	108	70%
Armored Core 4	89	77%
Armoured Core For Answer	108	63%
Army of Two	99	87%
Army of Two: The 40th Day	122	85%
Ashes Cricket 2009	117	73%
Assassin's Creed	95	81%
Assassin's Creed 2	**121**	**94%**
Superb action and a smart, stealthy and well-rounded story – a perfect sequel.		
Band Hero	122	81%
Batman: AA	118	92%
Batman: AA GOTY	**126**	**92%**
Still one of PS3's best, but better without archaic 3D glasses.		
Battlefield Bad Company	103	80%
Battlefield Bad Company 2	125	87%
Beyonetta	**122**	**90%**
Sexy, epic and [illegible] – a slick action game.		
The Beatles: Rock Band	119	87%
Beijing 2008	103	57%
Beowulf	95	41%
Bionic Commando	114	67%
BioShock	106	93%
BioShock 2	**123**	**93%**
Tops the original in terms of storytelling and combat. Brilliant.		
Blacksite: Area 51	99	51%
Bladestorm; The 100 Year War	94	61%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	123	85%
Blazing Angels 2	97	70%
Blazing Angels SOWW2	86	52%
Blitz: The League II	107	59%
Bolt	111	44%
Borderlands	120	84%
The Bourne Conspiracy	103	65%
Brothers in Arms: HH	106	71%
Brutal Legend	120	79%
Burnout Paradise	97	89%
Burnout Paradise: TUB	112	80%
Buzz! Brain of the UK	114	70%
Buzz! Quiz TV	103	81%
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 09	110	29%
Call Of Duty 3	86	82%
COD 4: Modern Warfare	95	94%
Call of Duty: MW2	**121**	**96%**
Sublime in single, co-op and multiplayer. An incredible package.		
Call of Duty: World at War	108	79%
Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood	116	79%
Cars: Mater-National	97	51%
Chronicles of Narnia: PC	106	37%
Chronicles of Riddick: AODA	113	79%

New this month

Super Street Fighter IV PS3	95%	Greed Corp PSN	80%
Batman: Arkham Asylum GOTY PS3	92%	Just Cause 2 PS3	80%
GTA: Episodes from Liberty City PS3	88%	Revenge of the Wounded Dragons PSN	58%
Half Minute Hero PSP	86%	Prison Break: The Conspiracy PS3	50%

Game	Issue	Score
Clive Barker's Jericho	94	65%
The Club	97	72%
Colin McRae: Dirt	92	88%
Colin McRae: Dirt 2	118	89%

Andy K Says One of the most chaotic online racers on PS3. More *Destruction Derby* than *Colin McRae*, in a good way.

Comand & Conquer: RA3	113	71%
Conan	94	45%
Condemned 2: Bloodshot	99	81%
Conflict: Denied Ops	98	50%
Cross Edge	117	43%
Damnation	115	46%
Dante's Inferno	124	80%
Dark Sector	99	76%
Dark Void	123	68%
The Darkness	90	71%
Darksiders	123	77%
Dead Space	107	87%
Def Jam Icon	86	49%
Demon's Souls	121	88%
Destroy all Humans: POTF	112	17%
Devil May Cry 4	87	80%
Disgaea 3 Absence of Justice	111	82%
DJ Hero	**120**	**90%**
Polished to near-perfection, this is the next step in music games.		
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	103	70%
Dragon Age: Origins	121	63%
Dynasty Warriors 6	100	40%
Dynasty Warriors 6 Empires	116	45%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam	94	49%
Dynasty Warriors Gundam 2	112	35%
Dynasty Warriors Strikeforce	125	51%
Eat Lead: TROMH	113	63%
ESIV: Oblivion	**97**	**93%**
Incredible open-world adventure, but 100 hour+ length requires dedication.		
Enchanted Arms	88	68%
Enemy Territory Quake Wars	103	50%
Eternal Sonata	111	84%
Everybody's Golf 5	100	83%
Eye Of Judgement	94	79%
EyePet	120	83%
F.E.A.R	86	72%
F.E.A.R 2: Project Origin	111	80%
F1 Championship Edition	86	50%
FaceBreaker	105	48%
Fairytale Fights	121	40%
Fallout 3	**107**	**90%**
Imaginative, epic and brilliant, but too sprawling and slow for arcade gamers.		
Fantastic Four ROTSS	90	39%
Far Cry 2	**107**	**91%**
Challenging, [illegible] with liberating tactical freedom.		
Ferrari Challenge	104	71%
Final Fantasy XIII	125	81%

Game	Issue	Score
FIFA 08	94	63%
FIFA 09	106	83%
FIFA 10	**119**	**90%**
The best FIFA and PES game [illegible] PES fans think twice.		
FIFA Street 3	98	71%
Fight Night Round 3	86	78%
Fight Night Round 4	116	80%
Folklore	93	69%
Fracture	107	67%
FUEL	115	73%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	86	36%
G1 Jockey 4 2008	107	32%
Genji: Days of the Blade	86	60%
Ghost Recon AW 2	91	86%
Ghostbusters	115	85%
GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra	118	61%
God of War Collection	123	85%
God Of War III	**125**	**93%**
Similar to [illegible] PS3's gods, if shy of the chrome.		
The Godfather: TDE	86	66%
The Godfather 2	113	68%
Golden Axe: Beast Rider	108	35%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	100	87%
Grand Theft Auto IV	**101**	**96%**
Imperfect, but the most [illegible] funny, compelling GTA ever.		
GTA: Episodes from Liberty City	126	88%
Guitar Hero 3	95	90%
Guitar Hero 5	**119**	**91%**
Not a re-invention, but the most thorough and polished GH yet.		
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	104	78%
Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits	117	70%
Guitar Hero: Metallica	114	86%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	124	40%
Guitar Hero: World Tour	108	88%
Gundam: Target in Sight	86	28%
Harry Potter	90	55%
Harry Potter ATHBP	116	61%
Haze	102	71%
Heavenly Sword	93	65%
Heavy Rain	124	88%
Hellboy: Science of Evil	105	43%
Heroes Over Europe	119	69%
Il-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	118	82%
The Incredible Hulk	104	55%
inFamous	115	71%

Milf Says No it wasn't perfect, and yes the world was grim, but it was full of distractions that kept me playing.

Iron Man	101	36%
James Cameron's Avatar: TG	122	63%
Juiced 2	94	80%
Just Cause 2	126	80%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	95	58%
Katamari Forever	119	77%

Game	Issue	Score
Killzone 2	111	88%
King of Fighters XIII	117	54%
Kung Fu Panda	104	72%
Lair	93	54%
Last Rebellion	124	61%
Legend of Spyro	109	56%
Legends of Wrestling	113	58%
Legendary	108	48%
Lego Batman	107	72%
Lego Indiana Jones	102	70%
Lego Indiana Jones 2	122	78%
Lego Rock Band	122	83%
Lego Star Wars: TCS	95	80%
Leisure Suit Larry: BOB	115	14%
LittleBigPlanet	**107**	**97%**
The game PS3 was waiting for – richly creative and truly fresh.		
Lord of the Rings: Conquest	111	20%
Lost Planet	98	69%
Lost: Via Domus	99	42%
Madden NFL 08	92	74%
Madden NFL 2009	105	89%
Madden NFL 2010	118	88%
MAG	124	73%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	86	72%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	120	67%
Medal of Honor: Airborne	96	69%
Mercenaries 2: WIF	106	76%
MGS4: GOTP	**102**	**95%**
A richly layered, [illegible] resolves the series' history – at a cost.		
Midnight Club L.A	107	81%
Mini Ninjas	118	65%
MSC Paintball 2009	111	23%
Mirror's Edge	108	84%
MK vs DC Universe	108	75%
MotoGP 08	108	55%
MotoGP 09/10	125	84%
MotorStorm	86	88%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	107	80%
MX vs ATV Reflex	124	74%
MX vs ATV Untamed	99	60%
NASCAR 08	92	48%
NBA 2008	97	61%
NBA 2K7	88	69%
NBA 2K8	96	76%
NBA 2K9	107	82%
NBA 2K10	121	88%
NBA Live 08	93	76%
NBA Live 09	106	63%
NBA Live 10	120	88%
NBA Street Homecourt	87	80%
Need For Speed Carbon	86	58%
Need For Speed ProStreet	95	79%
Need For Speed: Shift	119	80%

Andy H Says A more serious, *GRID* inspired *NFS*, which offers speed over style. One of the best for years.

NFL Tour	99	48%
NHL 08	93	77%
NHL 09	105	85%
NHL 10	119	79%
NHL 2K7	88	76%
NHL 2K8	96	71%
NHL2K9	107	77%
NHL 2K10	119	79%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	90	80%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	118	87%
Operation Flashpoint: DR	120	85%
The Orange Box	**96**	**90%**
[illegible] great games [illegible] imperfect port of a perfect package.		
Overlord: Raising Hell	101	72%
Overlord II	116	68%
PES 2009	106	88%
PES 2010	119	89%
Pirates of the Caribbean	89	55%
Prince of Persia	109	68%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	126	50%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	94	86%
Prototype	116	82%
Pure	106	75%
Quantum of Solace	108	51%
Race Driver: GRID	**102**	**90%**
A jam-packed racer [illegible] very beautiful. A new racing standard.		
Rainbow Six Vegas	90	76%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	99	78%
Ratchet & Clank: ACIT	**119**	**90%**
Massive, rewarding [illegible] expect, plus some cute new twists.		
Ratchet & Clank: TOD	93	93%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	115	86%
Resident Evil 5	112	86%
Resident Evil 5 Gold Edition	125	86%
Resistance 2	108	81%
Resistance Fall of Man	86	89%
Resonance of Fate	125	80%
Ridge Racer 7	86	79%
Rise of the Argonauts	111	47%
Rogue Warrior	123	26%
Rock Band	96	88%
Rock Band 2	**113**	**91%**
Makes you feel like [illegible] band, and edges out its nearest rivals.		
Ryu Ga Gotoku Kenzan	100	75%
The Saboteur	122	69%
Sacred 2	115	51%
SAW	121	65%
SBK 08	106	54%
SBK 09	115	70%
Sega Golf Club	88	53%
Sega Megadrive Collection	112	60%
Sega Rally	93	79%
Sega Superstar Tennis	99	73%
Shaun White Snowboarding	108	68%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	112	38%
Sid Meiers Civ Rev	103	86%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	111	72%
Simpsons Game	95	70%
SingStar	93	81%
SingStar Motown	118	85%
SingStar: Pop Edition	114	66%
SingStar: Queen.	113	70%
SingStar Take That	121	75%
SingStar Vol. 2	102	85%
SingStar Vol. 3	109	75%
Skate	93	91%
Skate 2	**110**	**91%**
[illegible] Only familiarity numbs its raw thrills.		
SNK Arcade Classics	109	60%
Soldier Of Fortune: Payback	97	62%
Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing	125	74%
Sonic the Hedgehog	86	47%
Sonic Unleashed	109	60%
Soul Calibur IV	104	85%
Spider-Man 3	89	72%
SpiderMan Web of Shadows	109	53%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	88	75%
Star Wars the Clone Wars: RH	121	25%
Star Wars: TFU	106	59%
Stormrise	112	79%
Stranglehold	93	78%
Street Fighter IV	110	95%
Stuntman	92	75%
Supercar Challenge	118	74%
Superstars V8 Racing	115	65%
Super SF IV	**126**	**95%**
The best fighter ever made just got better in almost every way.		
Tekken 6	120	70%
Terminator Salvation	115	35%
Tiger Woods 07	86	81%
Tiger Woods 08	93	68%
Tiger Woods 09	105	80%
Tiger Woods 10	116	76%
Time Crisis 4	97	44%
TimeShift	86	72%
TNA impact	106	69%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	108	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X	112	63%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	108	83%

Richard Says Impressive vistas and classic *Tomb Raider* puzzles mean this is worth picking up on the cheap.

Tony Hawk: RIDE	123	41%
Tony Hawks Project 8	86	80%
Tony Hawks Proving Ground	94	85%
TopSpin 3	103	79%
Transformers	91	52%
Transformers: ROTF	117	51%
Turning Point: Fall of Liberty	100	37%
Turok	87	71%
UEFA Euro 2008	100	67%
UFC 2009 Undisputed	115	77%
Uncharted: Drakes Fortune	96	89%
Uncharted 2: AT	**120**	**95%**
Gorgeous, funny, and epic. A must-have adventure for your PS3.		
Unreal Tournament 3	97	85%
Untold Legends	86	59%
Valkyria Chronicles	107	85%
Vancouver 2010	124	35%
Viking: Battle for Asgard	100	64%
Virtua Fighter 5	86	87%
Virtua Tennis 3	86	85%
Virtua Tennis 2009	115	81%
Wall-E	104	42%
Wanted	113	66%
Way of the Samurai	125	64%
WET	119	71%
Wheelman	113	65%
White Knight Chronicles	125	56%
Wolfenstein	118	49%
World Snooker Championship	86	75%
WSC Real 09	112	52%
WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 08	94	79%
WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 09	108	70%
WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 10	120	82%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	114	71%
Yakuza 3	**125**	**90%**
A deep, [illegible] adventure with heart. And fists.		

Like this? Try this Old games you might like

Battlefield: Bad Company 2
A tactical masterpiece where the smart survive, and trigger-happy glory hunters are left lingering in the dregs of the leaderboard.

Warhawk
Features huge maps brimming with tactical possibilities. This is another game where smart team play always triumphs.

For full PS3, PS2, PSP listings go to Side B of the PSM3 disc.

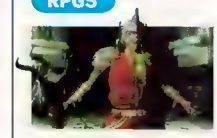
TOP 3 PS3 SPORT

01 **Skate 2**
02 **FIFA 10**
03 **Madden NFL 2009**

PSM3 WILDCARDS
Tony Hawk's Project 8
Tony's first next-gen outing. Better than *RIDE*.

Ashes Cricket 2009
The only game cricket fans will ever need.

TOP 3 PS3 RPGS



01 **Oblivion**
02 **Fallout 3**
03 **Demon's Souls**

PSM3 WILDCARDS
Dragon Age: Origins
A vast dialogue-heavy epic. Ugly, though.

Folklore
Surreal and imaginative RPG set in rural Ireland.

TOP 3 PS3 BEAT 'EM UPS

01 **Super SFIV**
02 **Virtua Fighter 5**
03 **BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger**

PSM3 WILDCARDS
Tekken 6
Imaginative characters and solid brawling.

MK vs DC Universe
Some great fatalities and comic cameos

TOP 3 PS3 PSN

01 **Braid**
02 **Peggle**
03 **Warhawk**

PSM3 WILDCARDS
Hustle Kings
Quality pool sim. Trick shots are loads of fun.

Everyday Shooter
Compelling indie shmup with great visuals.

MY TOP 5

Modern Warfare 2 satisfies with every head shot. It's my top game

Miles Hamer
A member of the PSM3 Facebook group's fave PS3 games.

01 Modern Warfare 2
Satisfies with every head shot.

02 Flower
Beautiful, soothing and moving.

03 Skate
The city is a joy to explore at my own pace.

04 GTA IV
A non-stop rampage of hilarious fun.

05 Heavy Rain
It's about as immersive as gaming gets.

MY TOP 5

Battlefield Bad Company 2 beats *Modern Warfare* by miles

Sean Ferran
Another Facebook member.

01 BioShock
Because it had the best story ever written.

02 GTA: San Andreas
The biggest open world game ever made.

03 LittleBigPlanet
It was a fresh approach to the platformer genre.

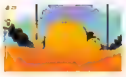
04 God of War 3
It's the best game in a brilliant series.

05 Bad Company 2
Better than *COD*, and destruction is fun.

PSN A-Z Listing

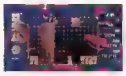
Game	Issue	Score
1942: Joint Strike	103	52%
Age Of Booty	110	78%
Battle Tanks	119	70%
Battlefield 1943	116	87%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	105	79%
Blast Factor	87	85%
Blue Toad Murder Files: TMOLR	123	40%
Braid	**123**	**92%**
Complex and beautiful, one of the best puzzle games of all time.		
Burn Zombie Burn	110	80%
Call of Duty Classic	123	83%
Andy K Says Infinity Ward's first game. Seriously shows its age, but the shooting is still supremely tight.		
Calling All Cars	89	78%
Comet Crash	121	83%
Crash Commando	109	52%
Critter Crunch	120	77%
Crystal Defenders	117	61%
Dark Mist	100	70%
Echochrome	101	83%
Elefunk	105	74%
Everyday Shooter	97	80%
EyeCreate	94	56%
Fat Princess	118	75%
Fatal Inertia Ex	102	64%
Flock	114	81%
Flow	87	82%
Flower	111	83%
Go Puzzle	87	64%
Go Sudoku	87	39%
Gran Turismo HD Concept	87	84%
Gravity Crash	123	81%
Greed Corp	126	80%
GTi Club+	108	77%
Owen Says A pure arcade conversion with updated online features, *GTi Club+* provides a pricey, but enticing, package.		
Gunstar Heroes	117	37%
Hail to the Chimp	106	43%
Heavy Weapon	121	67%
High Velocity Bowling	98	72%
Hustle Kings	122	82%
The Last Guy	106	80%
Lemmings	87	40%
LocoRoco Cocorechho	94	56%
Madden NFL Arcade	124	58%
Marvel vs Capcom 2	117	78%
Mega Man 9	107	69%
Monster Madness: GD	105	38%
NOBY NOBY BOY	113	72%
Nucleus	89	57%
Numblast	116	73%
Operation Creature Feature	93	54%
Outrun Arcade Online	112	77%
Pain	98	75%
Peggle	**123**	**90%**
Ludicrously addictive and sickeningly cute – *Peggle* will make you happy.		
PixelJunk Eden	106	76%
PixelJunk Monster	98	80%
PixelJunk Racers	94	80%
PixelJunk Shooter	123	89%
Piyotama	96	70%
Punisher No Mercy	117	55%
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	116	77%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: FOP	114	63%
Ratchet & Clank: QFB	105	87%
Richard Says A fun extension on *Tools of Destruction* packed with classic *Ratchet* gameplay and weapons.		
Revenge of the WD	126	58%
Savage Moon	110	77%
Shatter	118	79%
Shikitei	104	55%
Siren: Blood Curse	104	80%
Sky Diving	98	59%
Smash Cars	119	62%
Snakeball	96	54%
SOCOM Confrontation	113	76%
Soldner-X: Himmelssturmer	111	59%
Street Fighter 2 HD Remix	109	84%
Super Rub'a'dub	87	50%
Super Stardust	89	79%
Tekken Dark Ressurection	87	84%
Tornado Outbreak	121	63%
Trash Panic	115	76%
Trials of Topoq	93	52%
Trine	120	79%
Warhawk	**93**	**90%**
The perfect showcase for the PSN. Rich, rewarding and exciting.		
Watchmen: The End is Nigh	113	34%
Watchmen: The End is Nigh P2	118	32%
Wipeout HD	107	79%
Wolf of the Battlefield: C3	103	68%
Worms PSN	114	78%
Zombie Apocalypse	122	73%

PSP Top Twenty



01 LocoRoco
PSM 76 | **Score** 93% | UMD
"Simple to pick up and play. The happiest game on PSP."

02 Burnout Legends
PSM 67 | **Score** 92% | UMD
"A fast, fun racer with great online play."



03 Lumines 2
PSM 82 | **Score** 92% | UMD
"Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for ages."

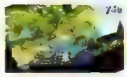
04 GTA: Vice City Stories
PSM 81 | **Score** 91% | UMD
"One of PSP's best games. An example of top-drawer fun."

05 Virtua Tennis World Tour
PSM 65 | **Score** 91% | UMD
"Easily the Roger Federer of tennis games. Ace."

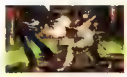
06 Gitaroo Man Lives
PSM 78 | **Score** 90% | UMD
"Challenging, weird and wonderful music game."

07 GTA: Liberty City Stories
PSM 69 | **Score** 90% | UMD
"Frustrating at times but a colossal beauty."

08 Crush
PSM 88 | **Score** 90% | UMD
"Steep learning curve, but massively inventive."



09 Final Fantasy Tactics: WOTL
PSM 93 | **Score** 89% | UMD
"Epic, tactical and polished beyond belief."



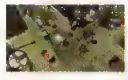
10 Tekken: Dark Resurrection
Issue 78 | **Score** 89% | UMD
"Home-console-quality scrapping that doesn't hurt your thumbs."

11 God of War: COO
PSM 100 | **Score** 88% | UMD
"As sweet as it is short. A Herculean feat of design."

12 Everbody's Golf 2
PSM 103 | **Score** 88% | UMD
"Playable and charming. Even if you don't like golf, give it a go."

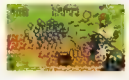
13 Ridge Racer
PSM 66 | **Score** 88% | UMD
"It's hard to imagine a better showcase for the PSP."

14 Disgaea: AOD
PSM 94 | **Score** 88% | UMD
"One of the most polished, deep role-players ever made."



15 GTA: Chinatown Wars
PSM 120 | **Score** 87% | UMD
"Substantial, hilarious and huge, but not as good as it was on DS."

16 Midnight Club 3
PSM 66 | **Score** 87% | UMD
"Trimmed from PS2, but the Wi-Fi gambling is the biz."



17 Half Minute Hero
PSM 126 | **Score** 86% | UMD/PSN
"Gloriously eccentric, poking fun at RPGs of yesteryear"

18 Killzone: Liberation
PSM 81 | **Score** 86% | UMD
"Works great on PSP. Much better than if they'd made it an FPS."

19 FM Handheld 2007
PSM 81 | **Score** 86% | UMD
"Builds on last year's version. A portable port masterclass."

20 Ratchet & Clank: SM
PSM 87 | **Score** 86% | UMD
"Every bit as good as the main console series."

Spotted! Bargain Buys

This month's top deals. Great games, better prices

Beaterator
PSM 120 | 80%
Where zavvi.com
Not a game, but a portable music sequencer. Includes hundreds of samples and loops, and can be surprisingly powerful with a bit of practice.
Value ★★★★★

Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection
PSM 112 | 60%
Where thehut.com
Relive Sega's glory days, from *Sonic* to *Streets of Rage*, with this package of over 30 classic (and not so classic) games.
Value ★★★

TNA Impact!
PSM 106 | 69%
Where asda.co.uk
Not quite up to *Smackdown*'s lofty standards, but a decent wrestling game with some clever gameplay twists at a super low price.
Value ★★★★★

Valkyria Chronicles
PSM 107 | 85%
Where amazon.co.uk
Superb tactical strategy RPG from Sega with an engaging storyline, deep gameplay and gorgeous hand-drawn visual style. An essential buy.
Value ★★★★

Star Wars: The Force Unleashed
PSM 106 | 59%
Where amazon.co.uk
Okay, so the gameplay is a bit shallow, but there are some incredible set-pieces, and Star Wars fanboys are well catered for.
Value ★★★

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain why

Haven: Call Of The King

Pub Midway | **Dev** TT | **PSM** 29 81%

Despite pre-release hype about *Haven*'s technology – which let you make the transition from outer space to the surface of a planet seamlessly – the game was a sales disaster. This wasn't helped by its bizarre art style, which clunkily mixed fantasy and science fiction to unappealing effect.

The game itself was admirably varied, sweeping regularly between platforming, space combat and vehicle sections. The controls were competent, it was enjoyable enough – it just lacked a certain magic. That's mostly the hero's fault. The best platformers are defined by likeable characters: Jak, Daxter, Mario, Luigi, Ratchet, Clank. *Haven* just didn't have any defining characteristics, besides being incredibly ugly.

So there are a lot of reasons why nobody bought this. Not because it was a *bad* game, but because it didn't have instant appeal. Even the box art was uninspiring, blending into shelves rather than jumping out and punching you in the face.

eBay Going, Going, Gone Expensive tat edition

BioShock wine

Bottles of this 'Arcadia Merlot' were left scattered on beaches across the world as part of a *BioShock 2* promo campaign.

Price £100
Link bit.ly/9zO7Py

Final Fantasy XIII record

Music from the latest *Final Fantasy*, in trendy vinyl format. Perfect for DJs who are looking to do some painfully ironic mash-ups.

Price £300
Link bit.ly/95JrRT

Ebony & Ivory

Replicas of Dante's cherished pistols from the *Devil May Cry* series. For cosplayers or mentalists with money to burn.

Price £200
Link bit.ly/cGFfBv

My Top 5... Pad-throwing rages

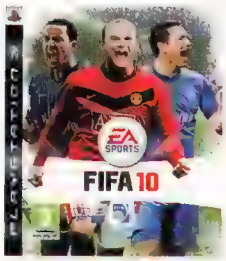
Richard Broughton, Deputy Art Editor

01 God of War III

Pub Sony | **Dev** Santa Monica Studios | **PSM** 125 | **Score** 93%

Forget defending chains from minotaurs and animations locking you in a combo. The most infuriating part of *GOWIII* is flying up and down the 'Chain of Balance'.

You're likely to burst a vein as you attempt to evade flaming boulders and other debris. The worst bit? For the majority of the flight, one wrong move will result in instant death . Prepare to see the red mist as you spend *ages* memorising the ideal route.



02 FIFA 10

Dev EA | **PSM** 119 90%

There's nothing like battering the opposition for 89 minutes only to lose one nil to a ridiculously scripted own goal. Unbelievable.

03 Mirror's Edge

Dev Volition | **PSM** 115 86%

Dodgy combat and counter moves are made all the more infuriating when trying to achieve the 'Test of Faith' Trophy. Aaaaggggghhhh.

04 Kingdom Hearts 2

Dev Square Enix | **PSM** 80 94%

How can someone get mad at a game with such lovable characters you ask? Answer, the 800 attempts it takes to defeat Sephiroth. Bastard.

05 Braid

Dev Jonathan Blow
PSM 123 92%

Reaching the more elusive jigsaw pieces will test anyone's patience. Thankfully, the pay-off is worth it.

Out this month

The best games and Blu-ray movies available this month

Friday 7th May, 2010

Caligula — Arrow Video — Blu-ray — 03/05 — £25

The story of the rise and fall of Roman emperor Gaius Caesar Germanicus, better known as Caligula. If you thought *God Of War*'s Aphrodite scenes were hot, this cavalcade of historical depravity will blow your mind.

Also out Caligula too rich for your blood? Try heart-warming children's classic The Railway Children on Blu-ray.

Friday 14th May, 2010

Skate 3 — EA — PS3 — 14/05 — £50

Levels created with EA Black Box's incredible new create-a-park mode can be shared online, meaning soon after release there will be loads of user-created parks to download. Infinite, free DLC. Kind of.

Where The Wild Things Are — Warner — Blu-ray — 10/05 — £25

A fantasy drama directed by Spike Jonze, adapted from Maurice Sendak's famous children's book. A gorgeously produced, poignant dissection of youth with music by Karen O of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

3D Dot Game Heroes — SouthPeak — PS3 — 14/05 — £30

This tongue-in-cheek RPG is set in a kingdom that was once 2D and pixelated, but made 3D because the king thought it was outdated. It's a parody of games like Zelda on NES, with uniquely stylised visuals.

Also out Battlestar Galactica fan? Spin-off movie The Plan is available on Blu-ray this week.

Friday 21st May, 2010

Lost Planet 2 — Capcom — PS3 — 18/05 — £50

The 'Vital Suit' mechs that defined the first Lost Planet have been tweaked to suit the new game's new co-op focus. As one player drives, two others can hang on the sides and fire at enemies as it stomps around the level.

ModNation Racers — Sony — PS3 — 21/05 — £40

Following the same 'play, create, share' philosophy as LittleBigPlanet, ModNation features extensive customisation options, from characters – based on those trendy vinyl figures – to the cars themselves.

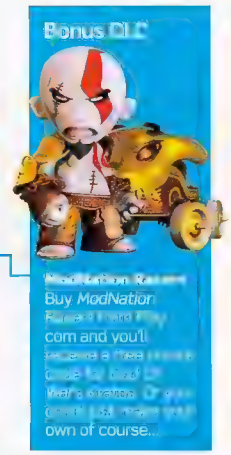
Split/Second Velocity — Disney — PS3 — 21/05 — £40

The tracks in this arcade racer are rigged with set-pieces designed to destroy your – or other racers' – cars. Plane crashes, collapsing buildings and explosions are all vying to ruin your lap time.

The Road — Icon — Blu-ray — 17/05 — £20

A man and his son travel across post-apocalyptic America, hunted by cannibalistic tribes of other survivors and struggling to stay alive. Bleak, isolated and beautifully evocative, if massively depressing.

Also out For a less dreary post-apocalyptic adventure, seek out The Book of Eli on Blu-ray.



Friday 28th May, 2010

Lego Harry Potter — Warner — PS3 — 28/05 — £40

Hogwarts, like Mos Eisely and the university in Lego Indy and Lego Star Wars respectively, serves as the hub for this plastic recreation of the first four years of the boy Potter's wizard training. Surprisingly fun.

UFC Undisputed 2010 — THQ — PS3 — 28/05 — £40

Simplified controls make ground grappling in this sequel a lot easier: everything is now mapped to the Right Stick. Additionally, there are new fighters and a vastly improved career mode to work through.

Blur — THQ — PS3 — 28/05 — £40

Like *Mario Kart*, but with licensed cars and realistic tracks. Better than it sounds, even if the idea of a Ford Focus firing a laser as it skids around the streets of Tokyo sounds like the stupidest thing ever.

Also out Grab Jason Reitman's excellent Up In The Air on Blu-ray this week.

And the best of what's out NOW...

BLU-RAY

1. Lord of the Rings Trilogy
2. Moon
3. Inglourious Basterds
4. Up
5. Fight Club
6. Blade Runner
7. Watchmen
8. Paranormal Activity

PSN

1. Braid
2. Peggle
3. PixelJunk Shooter
4. Flower
5. Warhawk
6. Battlefield 1943
7. Siren: Blood Curse
8. R&C: Quest For Booty

DLC

1. The Zombie Island of Dr Ned (Borderlands)
2. Bonfire of the Vanities (Assassin's Creed 2)
3. Desperate Escape (RE5)
4. Sinclair Solutions pack (BioShock 2)
5. Dragon Age: Awakening

VIDEO STORE

1. Fantastic Mr Fox
2. Dante's Inferno
3. The Legend of Chun-Li
4. Ong Bak
5. Jennifer's Body
6. Up
7. Star Trek
8. The Hangover

DEMOS

1. Just Cause 2
2. Yakuza 3
3. Heavy Rain
4. Bayonetta
5. Sega All-Stars Racing
6. Dante's Inferno
7. Lost Planet 2
8. Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

PSONE

1. Final Fantasy VII
2. Metal Gear Solid
3. Final Fantasy VIII
4. Syndicate Wars
5. Bishi Bashi Special
6. C&C: Red Alert
7. Kula World
8. Crash Bandicoot 2

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How long will I be waiting for...

The next big games in your favourite genre, and how long you'll need to wait for them

War

3 MONTHS

R.U.S.E.

Pub EA | ETA June

There aren't many strategy games on PS3, and to fewer that work with the DualShock. It's a shame [illegible] leaving Command & Conquer 4 to the Xbox 360 and PC, but this [illegible] RUSE is the next best thing. It's [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

5 things to remember this month

Crysis 2
"We're the only mag to see it running, and it's easily the best looking shooter on PS3, even six months before its December 2010 release."
page 24

Vanquish
"There's so much happening all at once, and the screen is filled with sparks and micro-explosions, but *Vanquish* is running smoothly."
page 34

ModNation Racers
"We can't wait to see what happens when the more ingenious gamers out there try the customisation"
page 90

MGS Peace Walker
"The most feature-packed *MGS* in the series, and a bold refinement of its tried and tested stealth gameplay"
page 48

Just Cause 2 Top Ten
"There's a sliver of beach where you'll find the limp, rotting carcass of a beached whale. Destroy it."
page 104

Next issue on sale
Thursday June 3

1. **A top secret World Exclusive PS3 reveal**
2. Huge reviews – *Prince of Persia, Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker, Red Dead Redemption*... and loads more.
3. *Fallout: New Vegas* – epic follow-up feature to the RPG sequel we exclusively unveiled at the start of the year.
4. A *second* World-Exclusive reveal – and no, we can't talk about this one either. Or give you any clues...
5. *Call Of Duty 7* – we'll reveal all next-month with first details from the game's imminent announcement.

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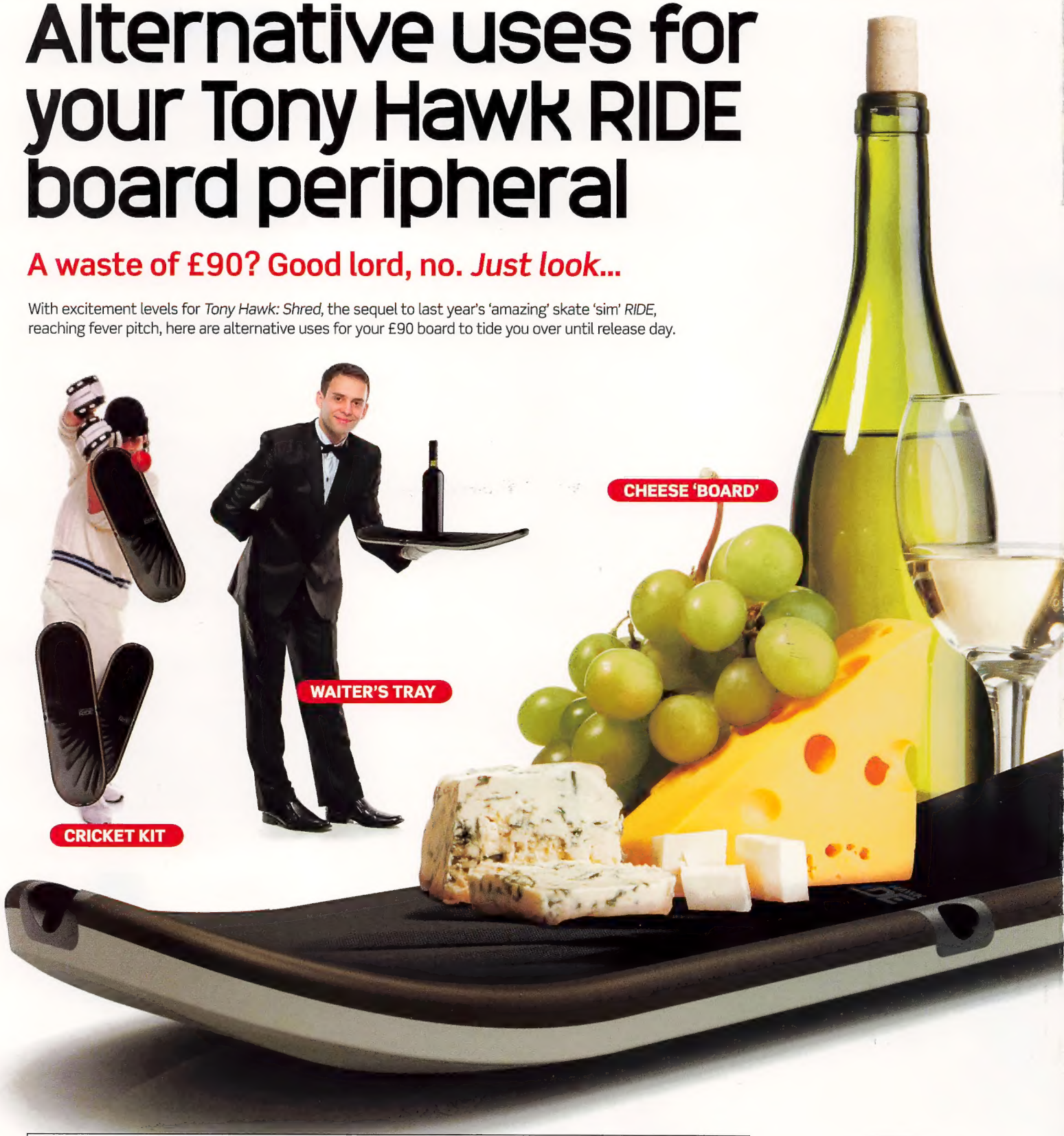
Alternative uses for your Tony Hawk RIDE board peripheral

A waste of £90? Good lord, no. *Just look...*

With excitement levels for *Tony Hawk: Shred*, the sequel to last year's 'amazing' skate 'sim' *RIDE*, reaching fever pitch, here are alternative uses for your £90 board to tide you over until release day.



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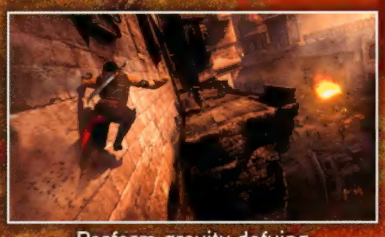
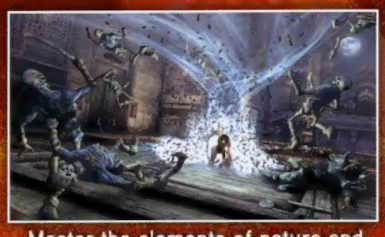
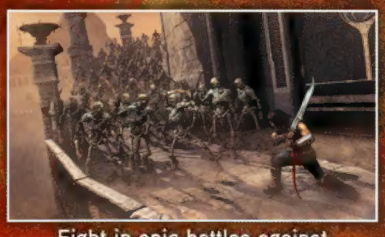


Perform gravity defying acrobatic moves



Master the elements of nature and use them to manipulate the world



Fight in epic battles against terrifying hordes of enemies

12

UBISOFT

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